

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

By the same Author

THE DREAM OF THE ROOD
CHRIST IN THE STRAND, AND OTHER POEMS
COWPER AND HIS POETRY
POLE AND CZECH IN SILESIA
JOSEPH HOWE. A STUDY IN ACHIEVEMENT
AND FRUSTRATION
Etc.



Topical Press

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

James Matthew Barrie

An Appreciation

By

PROFESSOR JAMES A. ROY

I am not speaking of up-to-date memoirs in which there is a completely successful attempt to dig up the dead and twist the finger in the socket. Sir James Barrie in his Address to the Rhodes Scholars at Oxford, June 20th, 1928.

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER

ERRATA

Page 11, line 9, *for* "Ronaldson" *read* "Donaldson."

Page 27, line 16, *for* "1775" *read* "1773."

Page 27, line 19, *for* "fifty-nine" *read* "fifty-two."

Page 27, line 22, *for* "1860" *read* "1806."

Page 33, line 17, *for* "There are flower-boxes" *read* "Now there are flower-boxes."

Illustration facing page 92, *for* "Ronaldson" *read* "Donaldson."

Page 98, four lines from foot of page, *for* "drew" *read* "draw."

Page 115, four lines from foot of page, *for* "Ronald Macleod" *read* "Donald Macleod."

Page 115, two lines from foot of page, *for* "Ronald Macleod" *read* "Norman Macleod."

Page 116, three lines from foot of page, *for* "Ronald" *read* "Norman."

Page 246, line 9, *for* "they" *read* "thy."

Page 248, line 15, *for* "There were many Barrie touches" *read* "There are many Barrie touches."

Page 250, line 8, *for* "But he was no" *read* "But it was no."

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FOREWORD

YEARS ago now, a young journalist from Kirriemuir, David Wallace Archer, wrote a number of sketches about his native place, which he called *Leaves from Logiedale*.¹ He was being beaten in the battle with ill-health, but he collected his sketches into a little volume and asked another young Kirriemarian, who was rapidly coming to the front, to write a short Introduction to it. James Barrie consented, and did this amusing but almost forgotten little etching :

“ A few months ago I met, in London, a gentleman from Chicago (I think) who was very anxious to do Scotland thoroughly in a week or so. That he might miss nothing in Edinburgh, he meant to devote a whole day to it ; the Burns country was to get two days ; and Scott the remainder of the week.

“ ‘ You don’t happen to know a place in Scotland called Killamoor ? ’ he asked, when he had sketched his programme.

“ For a moment I was puzzled and shook my head.

“ ‘ It is also called Kirre,’ he continued, ‘ or——’

“ ‘ Or Kir ? ’ I suggested, taking the word from his mouth.

“ ‘ I see you know it. Now you can tell me whether it would be worth my while going there ? ’

“ Here was a predicament for a Kirriemuir man to be placed in. On the one hand was I, without

¹ Published by Messrs. Brodie and Salmond, Arbroath, 1889.

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blushing, to say that no one could pretend to a knowledge of Scotland, who had not gazed with pride (if he was a Scotsman), or with jealous admiration (if he was from foreign parts), on the Kirriemuir Square? On the other hand, could I be expected to belittle my town?

“‘What made you think of taking Kirriemuir in your wanderings?’ I asked.

“‘Why not?’ he said. ‘It seems to me a remarkable place.’

“‘Oh, it is,’ I admitted, ‘but there is no mention of it in the guide books.’

“‘It was a native of the place,’ he said, ‘who interested me in it.’

“‘Ah,’ I said, beginning to understand now, ‘a Kirriemarian whom you met in Chicago, I suppose? They are to be found everywhere.’

“‘According to him,’ he went on, ‘this Killamoore—he called it Killamoore——’

“‘Yes; we find that the easiest way of pronouncing it. But what did he tell you about it?’

“‘Well, he said he had never seen a town in America to look at it.’

“‘He was evidently a true Kirriemarian. Anything else?’

“‘Yes; I took him to our cricket ground, and he said it could not compare with the cricket ground at Kirriemuir.’

“‘Did he describe the Kirriemuir cricket ground?’

“‘He said they played on a place called the

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Hill ; and I said that if it was a hill it could not be level ground.'

" ' Did that take him aback ? ' "

" ' No ; he said the hill was as smooth as a billiard table.' "

In 1930 Barrie presented his native town with a cricket pavilion, when he made one of his most touching speeches. " Standing on this Hill of Memories," he began ; and the full meaning of his words came to me only now, as I turned away from the grave of Margaret Ogilvy and began to climb the remainder of the pathway that led to the Hill. The little boy who used to play cricket there, and who became a very famous author, had never really been away from Kirriemuir at all. He had gone South and made an incredible amount of money by his writings, and lived in a flat in the Adelphi. But he had been like a person who had gone away on a visit, whose attention was for the moment distracted by strange sights and sounds, who saw new faces and made new acquaintances. But all the time he was really thinking of them at home and waiting for the word to go back there.

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

CHAPTER I

KIRRIEMUIR AND THRUMS

THE story of the little red town of Kirriemuir is a long one, stretching far beyond the years of recorded time. Men lived there in the stone and bronze ages, and the seekers for knowledge about them have discovered in odd and secret places their poor legacies—weapons of war and the chase, the “Stannin’ Stane” and the Three Cairns on the Hill of Kirriemuir, the “House of the Loch,” or *Crannog*,¹ at Kinnordy, the Pecht’s House, or underground dwelling at Airlie, an urned cist or two, and the fragments of a prehistoric boat. About the year A.D. 50, the Roman Agricola forced his way northwards, and built a road along the foot of the Grampians. The road is still there—or a portion of it—in Caddam Wood ; it was there that the Little Minister first saw Babbie, and lovers stroll there of a summer’s evening. While the legionaries were toiling over its making, the Picts, who had been driven from the plains to the hills, swooped down, and a fierce battle took place. That was the Mons Graupius. In the end, the iron discipline of the Romans triumphed over the fury of the mountaineers, who broke, were scattered, and fled. No one can say for certain where the battle was fought. Some say it was on the Hill of Kirriemuir. But we *do* know that the Romans gained only a pyrrhic

¹ A lake dwelling.

victory which wrecked for ever their dream of crossing the Grampians.

After the Romans came the missionaries ; their relics may be seen in the parish churchyard of Kirriemuir—sculptured headstones with Celtic crosses, supported by the quaint figures of apostles, evangelists, saints and ecclesiastics. Who were the men who carved these symbols ? All we know is that they were Christians—Christians of the ancient Celtic Church, who were preaching to their fellow-countrymen long before Augustine and his fellow-monks landed in the south.

Kirriemuir has had the audacity during the course of its history to spell its name in no less than thirty-six different ways. It appears in the twelfth century as Kerimore, Kerimure, Kermuir, and Keirmore ; the word embodies the Gaelic *Carrou Mor*, or big quarter, and takes us back to the days before Christianity had reached the land. In 1411 the little town knew great tribulation when Ogilvy of Inverquharity, the bearer of a great name and the founder of a grand tradition, marched off the men of Kirriemuir to fight Donald of the Isles at Harlaw ; few of them came back.

Yes, Kirriemuir may be “ gey and mean and bleak,” but there are few places of its size that are richer in historical associations. In 1562 Mary Queen of Scots spent a night at Glamis Castle, a few miles south of the town, on her way to suppress Huntly’s rebellion in the north. One April evening in 1645 the great Marquis of Montrose, with two hundred musketeers, arrived in the little weaving



INVERQUHARITY CASTLE

“ D’ye mind yon day at Enderwharity an’ the cushic doos ? ”

village after the sack of Dundee. In 1691 Graham of Claverhouse marched through the town. James Philip of Almerieclose, in his Latin poem, *The Grameid*, describes the occasion :

*Jamque alacre omnes, Gramo duce et auspice Gramo,
 Jejuna sterilem Kerymoræ invisimus urbem.
 Et simul Aretoi pontem transmittimus Escæ.*¹

In the '15 Lord Strathmore marched from Glamis to Sheriffmuir, where he and many of the lads from Kirriemuir died bravely for the Jacobite cause. In the '45 young Lord Ogilvy marched off to join the Prince with six hundred men, sixty of whom came from Kirriemuir. They marched with the Prince into England, and retreated with him to Culloden, where many of them, including Ogilvy, fell. The '45 had unfortunate results for the little royalist town. Only one or two of those who had joined the rebels were men of substance ; the majority were labourers and workmen and weavers. But the Government hounded the rebels and their relatives, and penalized the weaving trade which, since the Union of 1707, had been steadily prospering under governmental supervision. Within a few years, however, the country began to recover from the Jacobite upheaval, and the weavers of Kirriemuir shared in the returning prosperity.

A stout race of men were the old hand-loom weavers. They were keen politicians, eager theologians and wide readers. Although the first

¹ " In high spirits, under the leadership and auspices of the Graham, we reach the bare town of Kirriemuir, and soon pass over the North Esk by its bridge." *Translation by Canon Murdoch.*

book shop in Kirriemuir was opened only just before Barrie's birth, an amazing number of books and periodicals found their way, in the carrier's cart, into the town. There was the ubiquitous *Chambers's Journal*, *Cassell's Educator*, and even *Punch*. The packman, or colporteur, trudged from house to house with *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Paradise Lost*, Dante's *Comedy*, Whiston's *Josephus*, and other classics on which that generation was brought up and on which it thrived wonderfully. Dr. Alexander Whyte "of Free St. George's, Edinburgh," a distinguished son of Kirriemuir, gave some very vivid memories of his native town in the fifties :

"Then as to workshops in Kirriemuir, they were all weavers' workshops in those days, with the handloom instead of steam as it is now. There were rows and rows of weavers' shops in the Newtown where I was brought up; generally comprised of a 'but and a ben,' the 'but' being the kitchen, with maybe a little room as a bedroom or sitting-room. Then at the other end there were four weaving looms. The father would have one, and perhaps two daughters would have one each, and the son would have one, or if he had not one some other person would have it, perhaps. It has always amazed me how the people managed to live. The father might make twelve or fourteen shillings a week, and with a little extra work he would perhaps make sixteen shillings, while the others would have perhaps five, or six, or seven shillings. It is amazing to

think of the way they turned out, and always had a little to give to a good cause, and sometimes—who would believe it?—were able to send their sons to college. But it was done.”

Two years later, on October 13th, 1909, when Dr. Whyte had become Principal of New College, Edinburgh, he told the audience which listened to his inaugural address something more about those far-off, heroic days :

“Your present Principal has been told that there was a full and a kind-hearted house on that Assembly night when he was led in to receive his orders from the Moderator. It may have been so only he did not see the Assembly all that night. All that night his eyes were away back sixty years before that Assembly night. Sixty years exactly to this anniversary day, the thirteenth of October, at about this very hour in the afternoon. And what he then saw, and this moment sees and hears, was a poor little fellow of twelve years old who was saying to his mother : ‘Don’t cry, mother ; don’t be afraid, for I will go and serve out my time ; but, mind you, I am going to be a minister.’ At that a great smile of love and pity broke over her strong sorrow-seamed face, when she turned away home wiping her tears with her apron.

“The next time I see that little man he is sitting on a gravestone in the parish kirkyard in his diet-hour reading the *Paradise Lost* that Mary Macpherson, Mr. Fearing of Kirriemuir’s gracious-hearted daughter, had given him for a

birthday gift. And to this day he well remembers how John Milton's great visions and great dialogues held his head and his heart high and safe above the songs and stories of the workshop. Again I see him every Saturday night in old James Mill's kitchen, sitting among the Chartist weavers who were waiting the arrival of the Dundee carrier who brought to them their weekly parcel of Radical papers. When the much-looked-for parcel was opened your future Principal got the new number of John Cassell's *Popular Educator* for next week's study, and the new number of the same publisher's *Biblical Educator* for to-morrow's reading. And there was not a happier home all next day in all the old Regality."

The power-loom, and its necessary assistant, the railway, meant not only the end of an era for Kirriemuir. It meant that the other-world old men with the white, round faces and the clean, white corduroys, and the green-sleeved vests, the bent, old women with the black-knitted mutches, and the black shawls and broad-striped petticoats, had received their marching orders. Their places were taken by smart young factory hands who thought nothing of making trips to Dundee and Aberdeen and Edinburgh during their holidays. But the coming of the young factory hand, if it has meant a higher standard of living for the workers, better clothes, more luxuries, greater freedom and more leisure, has not been entirely gain. It has, to a very great extent, meant the extinction of individuality,

the disappearance of the craftsman who took an artist's delight in his craft. That applies more particularly to those weavers who specialized in such work as the weaving of tablecloths with complex patterns. The last of these toiled in a dingy little loom-shop in the Roods. He was weaving his tablecloth, taking his time over it, watching it getting gradually nearer completion, when one day he felt unwell. He had never been ill in his life, and tried to pass it off lightly. He set his teeth and faced up to it ; but the disease got a firmer grip of him, until it finally had him by the throat. The doctor was frank with him ; he would never recover. Further, the doctor told him that the shadows were gathering swiftly, and that the end might come any day. When the old man understood what the verdict meant, he was seized with a sudden panic—not at the thought of death, for he had been preparing for death all his life, but because he might be called away before he had finished his work. “ I canna dee the noo, doctor,” he said, “ I juist canne dee afore I feenish my web.” And then began a race between the old man and death. He got up early and toiled late—far beyond the limits of his strength. Day in and day out the neighbours heard the whirr of his shuttle. Sometimes one of them would drop in for a few minutes, and light his pipe for him. One day the shuttle was silent. The neighbours commented on this across their green wooden palings, and when at last they entered the cob-webbed old shop, they found him seated at his loom, hands stretched as if protectingly across the

unfinished pattern. Death had beaten him in the race, and with his passing went another artist.

The transition from the hand- to the power-loom took place before Barrie's very eyes.

“Before I reached my tenth year, a giant entered my native place in the night and we woke up to find him in possession. He transformed it into a new town at a rate with which we boys only could keep up, for as fast as he built dams we made rafts to sail in them ; he knocked down houses, and there we were crying ‘ Pilly ! ’ among the ruins ; he dug trenches, and we jumped them ; we had to be dragged by the legs from beneath his engines ; he sunk wells and in we went. But although there were never circumstances to which boys could not adapt themselves in half an hour, older boys are slower in the uptake, and I am sure they stood and gaped at the changes so suddenly being worked in our midst, and scarcely knew their way home now in the dark. Where had been formerly but the click of the shuttle was soon the roar of ‘ power,’ handlooms were pushed into a corner as a room is cleared for a dance ; every morning at half-past five the town was wakened with a yell, and from a chimney-stack that rose high into our caller air the conqueror waved for ever more his flag of smoke. Another era had dawned, new customs, new fashions sprang into life, all as lusty as if they had been born at twenty-one ; as quickly as two people may exchange seats, the daughter, till now

but a knitter of stockings, became the breadwinner, he who had been the breadwinner sat down to the knitting of stockings ; what had been yesterday a nest of weavers was to-day a town of girls."

But why Thrums ? Kirriemuir, the town where Barrie was born, and Thrums, "the handful of houses, jumbled together in a cup," in which "until twenty years ago, its every other room, earthen-floored and showing the rafters overhead, had a hand-loom and hundreds of weavers lived and died Thoreaus 'ben the hoose' without knowing it," are two quite different places. Geographically, of course, they are one and the same, but the Thrums of Barrie is only a portion of Kirriemuir, and the men and women who weave in and out of the pages of the Thrums volumes had little to do with, or to say to those who lived and moved and had their being outside the very limited orbit of Auld Licht orthodoxy. Thrums, "when viewed from the cemetery . . . is but two church steeples and a dozen red patches standing out of a snow heap. One of the steeples belongs to the new Free Kirk, and the other to the parish church, both of which the first Auld Licht minister . . . ran past when he had not time to avoid them by taking a back wynd." That is Thrums. Barrie carved Thrums out of Kirriemuir.

But why "thrums" ? "The word is simply the local technical term for threads, a bunch of which hung on every loom in the old weaving days. These thrums were the ends of warp, saved from previous

webs, or furnished with the new, to mend the broken threads of the growing fabric. . . . They played many parts in the domestic economy of a weaving community, these web ends, and were more in evidence than was any other detail of the trade. The weaver's dress, for instance, was often very 'thrummy.' His 'breeks' were tied at the knee, and often his 'gallaces' and minus buttons were replaced by the ubiquitous article. His finished web was tied with thrums, and if his barrow was broken or 'shauchly' they were freely used in repairs or strengthening. A watch chain made of plaited thrums was no exclusive monopoly, and as boot-laces they had a sort of universal popularity. Verily, to thrums the old-time weavers were indebted more than can now be rightly understood."¹

And just as Thrums was only a portion of Kirriemuir, so were the Auld Lights, about whom Barrie writes, only a section of the community. All Auld Lights were not weavers and all weavers were not Auld Lights. In Barrie's Thrums there were just as many religious denominations as there are in the town to-day—if not more. In Barrie's Thrums, besides the Auld Lights, were Moderates and Episcopalians, United Presbyterians and evangelical Free Churchmen, who had broken away from the Church of Scotland in the Disruption of 1843. Barrie himself was brought up in the Free Church, and very possibly was never inside the door of the Auld Licht Kirk, which he has immortalized. Religious differences in those days were too acute

¹ Alan Reid, *The Regality of Kirriemuir*, pp. 11-12.

to permit of wandering from one church to another. A man or woman in Kirriemuir was brought up in a particular church, and, unless a girl married into a different congregation, their lifelong loyalties were given to that particular church. Barrie left Kirriemuir when he was ten years of age, and being the son of David Barrie, it is very unlikely that he ever saw the inside of any church in Kirriemuir except his own—the South Free. It was through his mother that he knew the Auld Lights and their religious views. Margaret Ogilvy was brought up in the Auld Licht Kirk, which she continued to attend until her marriage to David Barrie. She took her memories with her and handed them on to her son.

The first Auld Licht Kirk in Kirriemuir was founded in 1775; it had twenty-nine members. Their first minister was Mr. James Aitken. When he accepted the call he was only twenty-two years of age. He remained their minister for fifty-nine years. Mr. Aitken was Margaret Ogilvy's minister, and it is not difficult to see him as the original of Mr. Carfrae in *The Little Minister*. In 1860, Mr. Aitken deposed two of his elders who had refused to give him the key of the box which held the cash and title deeds. Ordered by the Presbytery to reinstate the men, he refused, and was deposed in his turn. Barrie refers to this dispute in his sketch of "The Auld Licht Kirk" in the *Auld Licht Idylls* :

"One Sabbath day in the beginning of the century the Auld Licht minister at Thrums walked out of his battered, ramshackle, earthen-

floored kirk with a following and never returned. The last words he uttered in it were : ‘ Follow me to the commonty, all you persons who want to hear the Word of God properly preached ; and James Duphie and his two sons will answer for this on the Day of Judgment.’ ”

A new church was built for Mr. Aitken in Bank Street—the Auld Licht Kirk of the novels, where Margaret Ogilvy worshipped as a girl. No doubt some of the older members looked askance at the fine new building, and had qualms about entering it—especially as it saddled them with a debt of £500, which it took them many weary years to pay off. But the church that Barrie knew, before it was replaced by the present building, was a grim and depressing barn-like whitewashed structure, streaked with the rains and snows. It had two rows of windows facing the street, with little panes of glass which looked exactly like the windows of an ordinary house. The door, which was like a barn door, usually had one or two municipal notices stuck on it, and its dingy paint had been chalked and scraped by mischievous boys. The door-step was worn with use, and through the gap the winds blew and the snows drifted. Above the doorway was the vestry window, with a lace curtain on the lower half. Perhaps the only two features which made the building seem different from the other houses in the street were the solitary yard-high little zinc pipe on the roof, and the strip of brown paint at the bottom, which the boys kicked with their

tacketty boots as they went about their various deviltries.

Mr. Aitken died in 1834, but Margaret Ogilvy never forgot him. She used to talk about him with reverence, and something of her enthusiasm passed into her son. The Little Minister is a composite picture. His zeal in the pulpit, his commanding manner, his indefatigable habit of visiting the members of his flock, are Mr. Aitken. But in one respect Mr. Aitken was vastly different from Gavin Dishart. Mr. Aitken was a tall, dignified man. Why, then, the "little" minister? The answer is not hard to find. This was Barrie—Barrie who, like his own Sentimental Tommy, had such an instinct for play-acting that he simply had to dramatize himself.

But whether or not James Barrie was Gavin Dishart, he has described with beautiful tenderness and insight the meeting between the two ministers, the old and the young. It is exactly what the weary old servant of God would have said to his eager young brother.

"Gavin only saw a very frail old minister who shook as he walked, as if his feet were striking against stones. He was to depart on the morrow to the place of his birth, but he came to the manse to wish his successor God-speed. . . .

" 'May you never lose sight of God, Mr. Dishart,' the old man said in the parlour. Then he added, as if he had asked too much, 'May you never turn from Him as I often did when I was a lad like you.'

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

“As this aged minister, with the beautiful face that God gives to all who love Him and follow His commandments spoke of his youth, he looked wistfully around the faded parlour.

“‘It is like a dream,’ he said. ‘The first time I entered this room the thought passed through me that I would cut down that cherry tree, because it kept out the light, but, you see, it outlives me. I grew old while looking for the axe. Only yesterday I was the young minister, Mr. Dishart, and to-morrow you will be the old one, bidding good-bye to your successor.’

“His eyes came back to Gavin’s eager face.

“‘You are very young, Mr. Dishart?’

“‘Nearly twenty-one.’

“‘Twenty-one! Ah, my dear sir, you do not know how pathetic that sounds to me. Twenty-one! We are children for the second time at twenty-one, and again when we are grey and put all our burden on the Lord. The young talk generously of relieving the old of their burdens, but the anxious heart is to the old when they see a load on the back of the young. Let me tell you, Mr. Dishart, that I would condone many things in one-and-twenty now that I dealt hardly with in middle age. God Himself, I think, is very willing to give one-and-twenty a second chance. . . . Many views that I held to in my youth and long afterwards are a pain to me now, and I am carrying away from Thrums memories of errors into which I fell at every stage of my ministry. . . . And remember this, if your call

is from above it is a call to stay. Many such partings in a lifetime as I have had to-day would be too heartrending. . . .’

“The old minister, once so brave a figure, tottered as he rose to go, and reeled in a dizziness until he had walked a few paces. Gavin went with him to the foot of the manse road; without his hat, as all Thrums knew before bedtime.

“‘I begin,’ Gavin said, as they were parting, ‘where you leave off, and my prayer is that I may walk in your ways.’

“‘Ah, Mr. Dishart,’ the white-haired minister said, with a sigh, ‘the world does not progress so quickly as a man grows old. You only begin where I began.’

“He left Gavin, and then, as if the little minister’s last words had hurt him, turned and solemnly pointed his staff upward. Such men are the strong nails that keep the world together.”

That is Barrie at his best; but the picture is not entirely his own. The refined spiritual element which he infuses into a scene which strikes one with its essential sincerity, he derived from his mother.

“‘When you looked into my mother’s eyes,’ he tells us in *Margaret Ogilvy*, ‘you knew, as if He had told you, why God sent her into the world—it was to open the minds of all who looked to beautiful thoughts.’”

Not only did his mother strike the divine spark that was in her son, but “she told me everything,

and so my memories of the little red town are coloured by her memories." Some of the best of his work is to be found in the early Kirriemuir sketches. After his mother died Barrie was to know much sorrow and distress of soul ; he was to pass through experiences which would have made many a man morose or bitter. But he never allowed himself to become so. If with the passing years he has changed his ground somewhat and no longer speaks the simple language of Margaret Ogilvy, he has remained young in spirit and still companies with the swallows in the spring. That is because she has never really been out of touch with him, and he still hears the accents of that well-remembered voice across the near but infinite distance.

CHAPTER II

“SOMETHING WILL GET IN WHICH IS EITHER TO
MAKE OR TO DESTROY YOU”

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE was born in the Tenements in Kirriemuir, on May 9th, 1860. The Tenements are quiet enough nowadays, except for the shouts of the boys about the old washing-house at age-old ploys on summer evenings, and the occasional rattle of a cadger's cart as it bumps along the rutted roadway in front of the simple row of grey two-storied dwellings. The Barrie house is roofed with rough flags of slate-stone. The windows with their four panes of glass have darkish-coloured blinds which are pulled down when the sun is too strong and might take the colouring out of the carpets. A pipe reaches from the gutter which runs along the lower edge of the roof; the white caumed door-step, level with the sidepath, scrupulously clean, thrusts itself out cheerily to greet the visitor or the casual neighbour. There are flower-boxes in the two lower windows, and two rose trees climbing up the wall on each side of the door. The windows at the back of the house look towards the Auld Licht Manse. The Manse, as Barrie knew it,

“stood with its garden within high walls, and the roof facing southwards was carpeted with moss that shone in the sun in a dozen shades of green and yellow. Three firs guarded the house from west winds, but blasts from the north often tore down the steep fields and skirled through the manse, banging all its doors at once. A beech, growing on the east side, leant over the roof as if

to gossip with the well in the courtyard. The garden was to the south and was overfull of gooseberry and currant bushes. It contained a summer-seat where strange things were soon to happen."

But when Barrie was born, the Tenements were very different from what they are to-day. It was a noisy weaving district and the noise of the shuttle must have been almost the first sound that Barrie heard. His parents were poor. There were ten in the family, but some died when they were very young. His father, David Barrie, was a weaver and may at one time have been in charge of a loom shop. He was a man of high character, a constant churchgoer, and an ardent Chartist. Barrie held him in high esteem. "He was a most loving as he was always a well-loved husband," he wrote, "a man I am very proud to be able to call my father." Barrie has not written about him as he has about Margaret Ogilvy, but Hendry, in *A Window in Thrums*, suggests him.

"I do not know that I have been able to show in the most imperfect way what kind of man Hendry was. He was dense in many things, and the cleverness that was Jess's had been denied him. He had less book-learning than most of those with whom he passed his days, and he had little skill in talk. I have not known a man more easily taken in by persons whose speech had two faces. But a more simple, modest, upright man there never was in Thrums, and I shall always revere his memory."



BARRIE'S BIRTHPLACE

“SOMETHING WILL GET IN”

During his later years David Barrie lived in retirement in Kirriemuir, an old, white-haired man, with a Wellington nose and closely cropped white side-whiskers. He wore a black hat that might have been worn by a priest or a minister, had it retained its shape, only it had no shape at all. He always appeared in an old swallow-tailed coat, which had originally been either dark grey or black, but had turned green about the shoulders, with the years. As he grew older and more bent, the old coat climbed up his back and seemed to be shorter. His trousers were of brown-checked tweed, slightly frayed at the ends where they rubbed against his brightly polished boots with their heavy flaps. He invariably carried a yellow, knotty stick. He died in June, 1902, in his eighty-eighth year. Dr. Alexander Whyte, who was a life-long friend, called him one of the saintliest men he ever knew.

The character and personality of Margaret Ogilvy are known to the world. “I can see her now,” Dr. Whyte wrote, “a dear, little, sweet, gracious, humorous, tender-hearted soul.” Barrie idolized his mother. She exercised an almost incalculable influence on his earlier work, and on his later as well. She taught him to see Thrums with her own gentle eyes. In a sense she was to him what Dorothy Wordsworth was to her brother; she was both eyes and ears to him. She gave him his heroines; she was his heroine, a new type in literature. She was Margaret in *The Little Minister*, Jess in *A Window in Thrums*, and Grizel in *Sentimental Tommy*, Maggie in *What Every Woman Knows*. She dances

in and out of his plays like Babbie herself ; she was in a sense Babbie herself. The earlier Barrie stories are a compound of the people Margaret Ogilvy told her son about, and of the innermost circle of the Barrie family—David, the father, who is the Hendry we have already met, Jane Ann, who is the patient and self-sacrificing Leebie of the “ Window,” and Jamie, who is Barrie himself. In fact, Margaret Ogilvy influenced Barrie to such an extent that the mother *motif*, in one form or another, lies behind all his best and most characteristic studies of women. It is not so much love between man and woman as the comedy and tragedy of the maternal instinct that interests Barrie. We find this *motif* in *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*, in *Tommy and Grizel*, in *The Little White Bird*, in *The Old Lady Shows her Medals*. We find it in *Rosalind*, and in *Mary Rose*, and *Dear Brutus* finds its pathos in frustrated fatherhood. It was Margaret Ogilvy who turned all her son’s most memorable women characters into potential mothers, which was both a good and a bad thing for his literary reputation. Not that Barrie was ever ashamed or regretted his bondage. On the contrary, he gloried in it. In *The Little Minister*, when Gavin and Margaret are speaking about Babbie :

“ ‘ What,’ he said, ‘ is mere physical beauty ? Pooh ! ’

“ ‘ And yet,’ said Margaret, ‘ the soul surely does speak through the face to some extent.’

“ ‘ Do you really think so, mother ? ’ Gavin asked a little uneasily.



MARGARET OGILVY'S TOMBSTONE

“SOMETHING WILL GET IN”

“ ‘ I have always noticed it,’ Margaret said, and then her son sighed.

“ ‘ But I would let no face influence me a jot,’ he said, recovering.

“ ‘ Ah, Gavin, I’m thinking I’m the reason you pay so little regard to women’s faces. It’s no’ natural.’

“ ‘ You’ve spoilt me, you see, mother, for ever caring for another woman. I would compare her to you and then where would she be ? ’

“ ‘ Sometime,’ Margaret said, ‘ you’ll think differently.’

“ ‘ Never,’ answered Gavin, with a violence that ended the conversation.”

Again :

“ We had read somewhere that a novelist is better equipped than most of his trade if he knows himself and one woman, and my mother said : ‘ You know yourself, for everybody must know himself ’ (there never was a woman who knew less about herself than she), and she would add dolefully : ‘ But I doubt I’m the only woman you know well.’

“ ‘ Then I must make you my heroine,’ I said lightly.

“ ‘ A gey auld-farrant-like heroine ! ’ she said, and we both laughed at the notion—so little did we read the future.”

Margaret Ogilvy died on September 3rd, 1895. Among the crowd of mourners was a little boy with

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his father. The little boy had been told that the pale little man in black, who held one of the cords as the coffin was lowered into the grave, was a son of the dead woman and a very famous author. As the mourners turned away from the grave, the little man stood looking down at the coffin, his face drawn and twitching. He stood there alone for a long time and was still standing as the last of the mourners who had known Margaret Ogilvy turned the steep bend at the foot of the cemetery, and made their slow way to the waiting mourning coaches which took them back to the town.

The birth of James Barrie was not the only memorable event in the Barrie household that May morning. In his oddly mannered fashion, he tells us, with a deft blend of humour and pathos :

“On the day I was born we bought six hair-bottomed chairs, and in our little house it was an event, the first great victory in a woman’s long campaign ; how they had been laboured for, the pound-note and the thirty threepenny bits they cost, what anxiety there was about the purchase, the show they made in possession of the west room, my father’s unnatural coolness when he brought them in (but his face was white)—so I often heard the tale afterwards, and shared as boy and man in so many similar triumphs, that the coming of the chairs seems to be something I remember, as if I had jumped out of bed on that first day, and run ben to see how they looked.

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I am sure my mother's feet were etting to be ben long before they could be trusted, and that the moment after she was left alone with me she was discovered barefooted in the west room, doctoring a scar (which she had been the first to detect) on one of the chairs, or sitting on them regally or withdrawing and reopening the door suddenly to take the six by surprise. And then, I think, a shawl was flung over her (it is strange to me to think it was not I who ran after her with the shawl), and she was escorted sternly back to bed and reminded that she had promised not to budge, to which her reply was probably that she had been gone but an instant, and the implication that therefore she had not been gone at all. Thus was one little bit of her revealed to me at once : I wonder if I took note of it.”

Barrie was baptized in the South Free Church in Kirriemuir by the revered Daniel Cormick. The christening robe was produced and “borne magnificently (something inside it now) down the aisle to the pulpit-side, when a stir of expectancy went through the church and . . . however the child might behave, laughing brazenly or skirling to its mother's shame, and whatever the father as he held it up might do, look doited probably or bow at the wrong time, the christening robe of long experience helped him through.” So he tell us in *Margaret Ogilvy*.

In the beginning of his seventh year Barrie went to his first school, a little private school, in Bank Street, kept by two maiden ladies, the Misses Adam,

the daughters of a retired minister who had come to live in Kirriemuir. This is "The Hanky School" of *Sentimental Tommy*, and the two maiden ladies are Miss Ailie and Miss Kitty. This is Barrie's description of the room in The Dovecot, the "prim little cottage standing back from the steepest brae in Thrums"; not that there ever was such a cottage in Kirriemuir, but there was in Thrums.

"There were seven rooms in the house, but only two were of public note, the school-room, which was downstairs, and the blue-and-white room above. The school-room was so long that it looked very low in the ceiling, and it had a carpet, and on the walls were texts as well as maps. Miss Ailie's desk was in the middle of the room, and there was another desk in the corner; a cloth had been hung over it, as one covers a cage to send the bird to sleep. Perhaps Miss Ailie thought that a bird had once sung there, for this had been the desk of her sister, Miss Kitty, who died years before Tommy came to Thrums. . . .

"The pupils had to bring handkerchiefs to the Dovecot, which led to its being called the Hanky School, and in time these handkerchiefs may be said to have assumed a religious character, though their purpose was merely to protect Miss Ailie's carpet. She opened each scholastic day by reading fifteen verses from the Bible, and then she said sternly, 'Hankies!' whereupon her pupils whipped out their handkerchiefs, spread them on

“ SOMETHING WILL GET IN ”

the floor and kneeled on them while Miss Ailie repeated the Lord's Prayer. School closed at four o'clock, again with hankies."

Later, in *Quality Street*, we are to find ourselves once more in a blue and white room, but this time its owners are Miss Susan and Miss Phoebe Throssel. "The room is one seldom profaned by the foot of man, and everything in it is white or blue." Ten years later it is the blue and white room still, "but many of Miss Susan's beautiful things have gone. . . . Their place is taken by grim scholastic furniture: forms, a desk, a globe, a blackboard, heartless maps."

From the Misses Adams' seminary young Barrie was sent to the Free Church School. Here he played the usual games that the Kirriemuir boys played. The first book he read was *Robinson Crusoe*. The next was the *Arabian Nights*. The book was, however, only dipped into, never read, for he and his mother discovered that they were only "Nights," and not real "Knights" at all. Then, in the back bedroom of a house in Bank Street, over the only bookshop in Kirriemuir, he saw his first play. It was played on the bed, and the actors were puppets. That experience awoke in Barrie his liking for the stage. He resolved to become a dramatist.

First, however, he had to learn his trade, and the best way to learn how to become a dramatist, he decided, was to study the masters of the craft. In those days, he tells us:¹ there used to come to

¹ *Auld Licht Idylls*.

Kirriemuir a travelling showman who, besides playing *The Mountain Maid* and *The Shepherd's Bride*, exhibited "part of the tail of Balaam's ass, the helm of Noah's ark, and the tartan plaid in which Flora McDonald wrapped Prince Charlie." There was also "Sam'l Mann's Tumbling-Booth," with its tumblers, jugglers, sword-swallowers, and balancers. When Sam'l Mann's show left the town, other smaller ones took its place. "There was the well-known Gubbins with his "A' the World in a Box": a halfpenny peepshow, in which all the world was represented by "Joseph and his Brethren (with pit and coat), the bombardment of Copenhagen, the Battle of the Nile, Daniel in the Den of Lions, and Mount Etna in eruption." Auntie Maggy's Whirligig could be enjoyed on payment of an old pair of boots, a collection of rags, or the like. Besides these and other shows, there were the wandering minstrels, most of whom were "Waterloo veterans" wanting arms or a leg. I remember one whose arms had been "smashed by a thunderbolt at Jamaica." Queer bent old dames, who superintended "lucky bags" or told fortunes, supplied the uncanny element, but hesitated to call themselves witches, for there can still be seen near Thrums the pool where these unfortunates used to be drowned, and in the session book of the Glen Quharity kirk can be read an old minute announcing that on a certain Sabbath there was no preaching because "the minister was away at the burning of a witch." These were what were known as "storm-stead" shows, run by itinerant showmen who went their own ways

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in summer, “but formed little colonies in the cold weather, when they pitched their tents in any empty field or disused quarry and huddled together for the sake of warmth.” When the show was starved out it went elsewhere. “When dusk came the lights were lit, and the drummer and fifer from the booth of tumblers were sent into the town to entice an audience. They marched quickly through the nipping, windy streets, and then returned with two or three score of men, women, and children plunging through the snow or mud at their heavy heels.” But although this was “Orpheus fallen from his high estate” it did not deter the ambitious young dramatist. Barrie held a show of his own.

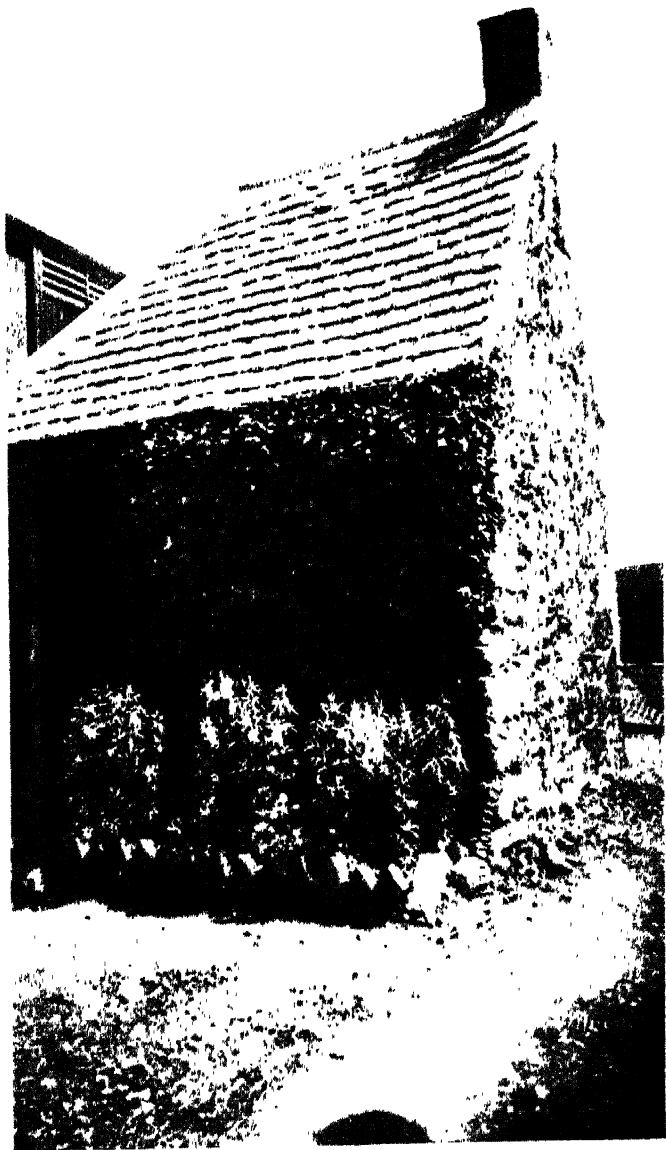
His first theatre was the little common washing house in the Tenements. Here the boys of the neighbourhood used to forgather—Barrie and his friend James Robb, whose lip he split with a spade, and one of their ploys was the acting of a play by Barrie, the climax being— But read what Barrie himself says :

“Some say that we are different people at different periods of our lives, changing not through effort of will, which is a brave affair, but in the easy course of nature every ten years or so. I suppose this theory might explain my present trouble (the ‘uncomfortable admission that I have no recollection of writing the play *Peter Pan*’), but I don’t hold with it; I think one remains the same person throughout, merely passing, as it were, in these lapses of time from one room to

another, but all in the same house. If we unlock the rooms of the far past we can peer in and see ourselves, busily occupied in beginning to become you and me. Thus, if I am the author in question the way he is to go should already be showing in the occupant of my first compartment, at whom I now take the liberty to peep. Here he is at the age of seven or so with his fellow-conspirator Robb, both in glengarry bonnets. They are giving an entertainment in a tiny old washing-house that still stands. The charge for admission is preens, a bool, or a peerie, . . . and apparently the culminating Act consists in our trying to put each other into the boiler, though some say that I also addressed the spellbound audience. The washing-house is not only the theatre of my first play, but has a still closer connection with Peter. It is the original of the little house the Lost Boys built in the Never Land for Wendy, the chief difference being that it never wore John's tall hat as a chimney. If Robb had owned a lum hat I have no doubt that it would have been placed on the washing-house."¹

Barrie went fishing with this same Robb in the burns near Kirriemuir, exactly as the "loons" go fishing in the holidays to-day. He dug up rosetty roots with Robb and a son of Mr. Brand, the banker, and sold them at doors from a barrow at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. the bundle—just as the boys do to-day in Kirriemuir. He played, too, the game of "chickie mailie."

¹ Introduction to *Peter Pan*.



"A tiny old washing-house that still stands."

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“Chickie mailie” was played as follows : A button was attached by a string to a pin. The pin was stuck in a window-sash, and the suspended button was made to tap, tap against the window-pane of the victim, by pulling a long string which was attached to the shorter. A harmless prank, a childish ploy, but it could be cruel enough as, for instance, when “certain big fellows with a turnip lantern” played the trick on the poor Painted Lady and made her scream. Barrie and Robb used to play together “till mysterious night fell,” and then the one would accompany the other half-way home. After they parted they whistled to each other to intimate that no doolie had got them so far. In the Kirriemuir speech¹ he tells us more about this whistle :

“It was a note we had invented—no one could whistle it except ourselves. Distance and the rugged things of life separated us as the years rolled on ; we seldom met again for nigh half a century. We had sworn eternal friendship but the rope seemed to have snapped. Then, two years ago, I was here on a sad errand, and the two of us went wandering away across the Hill through Caddam. . . .

“Well, that day in Caddam I made a grand discovery—that the great friend of my childhood was still the one who was closest to me in my doings. . . . During our walk in the wood Mr. Robb said to me, gruffly, in case we got sentimental you know :

¹ See Foreword.

“ ‘ We used to have a private way of whistling to each other.’

“ ‘ Did we ? ’ I said, growling for the same reason. We were both so thrawn, you understand, that we should have flichtered a Southerner. ‘ I could do it now,’ he said. ‘ Oh ? ’ I said. ‘ I suppose you have forgotten it ? ’ said he. ‘ It was a long time ago,’ I said.

“ ‘ Just so,’ said he. But I could see by his face that he wished I had remembered. I couldn’t keep it up any longer, so I joukit behind a tree and whistled our whistle.’ ”

We are to hear that whistle only once again. David and Jonathan have just parted and go their separate ways whistling to each other. I wonder whether Elizabeth Bergner realized that the last time that whistle was heard was in Caddam Woo’ ?

When his ploys for the day were over he would go home—“ an odd little figure,” and perhaps he would find his mother dull and out of sorts and he would try to bring the smile back to her face.

“ I have been told that my anxiety to brighten her gave my face a strained look and put a tremor into the joke. I would stand on my head in the bed, my feet against the wall, and then cry excitedly, ‘ Are you laughing, mother ? ’ ”

Poor as they were, Barrie’s people were ambitious for their family. Before James was born, an elder son, Alexander, had gone to Aberdeen University, in 1858, along with Alexander Whyte, and graduated

M.A. with first-class honours in Classics. When James was eight years old Alex was Classical master in Glasgow Academy, and his parents sent the younger son there in his charge. Young James's stay in Glasgow was made notable by one incident. Having lost a penny at a horse show in the Glasgow Academicals' ground, he returned in the evening to try to find it and found a threepenny-bit instead.

Meanwhile things were happening in Kirriemuir. The coming of the power-loom meant that many of the weavers who had made their living by the ancient craft, had either to enter the new factories or live on sufferance, by the kindness of the manufacturers. Among others who saw that he must think ahead was David Barrie. There was no future for his hand-loom, and for the moment no other opening in Kirriemuir. In Forfar, however—the Tilliedrum of Barrie's stories—a new factory had just been opened and David Barrie obtained a clerkship there. This meant that the whole family had to migrate to Forfar. Young James was sent home from Glasgow and reached Kirriemuir in time for the “flitting.” The family furniture was carefully packed into a cart along with the famous “six hair-bottomed chairs,” and when all the *lares et penates* had been safely bestowed, young James were hoisted on top. In this fashion Barrie entered Tilliedrum.

The change to Forfar meant a very considerable improvement in the family finances. David Barrie took a fairly substantial house, which still stands, in Canmore Street. James was sent to Forfar Academy to continue his interrupted education. But Forfar

Academy seems to have left very little impression on his memory. There is one photograph of a school group, taken by an itinerant photographer. Two heavily bearded masters in tall hats stand behind a row of ten senior boys in blue Balmoral bonnets. In front are seated nine bare-headed juniors on a form; among them is Barrie, a wistful-looking little lad. He is described by one of his contemporaries as shy and sensitive, and "not over fond of athletics, but a keen lover of the country." He had one gift—the ability to invent and tell a good story. He was now a great reader, two of his favourite books being *Martin Rattler* and *Ivanhoe*. In fact, *Ivanhoe* remained his favourite among Scott's novels, and years afterwards, he wrote a critical article which concluded :

"*Ivanhoe* is best. It contains characters almost as good as Monkbarns and the rest, the story is nearly as interesting as *Kenilworth*. Richard is nearly as good as Queen Mary. On the whole it is the most delightful thing in English fiction. Who would dare to draw a tournament after that one of Scott's? He has stopped the attempt as thoroughly as by Act of Parliament. And even as tournaments are his, so are Robin Hood and his merry men. As if the Saxons and Isaac of York and Richard and the siege of Torquilstone were not enough, he has flung in Rebecca and the Templar, to show that he is not 'subjective' merely, because to be 'objective' is better. Scott's greatest day was when he decided to

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finish *Waverley*. Next came the day when he sat down to write *Ivanhoe*.”

But if it is Thrums and not Tilliedrum that formed the background of Barrie's novels, the latter has its place in them, too. Between the two little towns there has existed an age-long rivalry which has not died down to this day, and which led to the famous battle of Muir Moss. The dispute arose over a piece of common ground between Forfar and Kirriemuir. Unable to settle their differences by peaceful means, the Forfar sutors¹ and the Kirriemuir weavers fought it out. The Forfarrians were defeated. The affair took place in 1645, and Drummond of Hawthornden, who happened to be visiting some friends in Angus shortly after the battle, wrote and forwarded to the Provost and the Town Council the following lines :

“The Kirriemarians and the Forfarrians
Met at Muir Moss,
The Kirriemarians beat the Forfarrians
Back to the Cross ;
Sutors ye are, and sutors ye'll be,
Fie upon Forfar ! Kirriemuir bears the gree.”

It was left for Barrie to turn the tale into romance. This he did in *Auld Licht Idylls*, where the story has taken a fantastic turn :

“The mustard-seed of a feud between the two parishes shot into a tall tree in a single night, when

¹ Shoemakers. Shoemaking was at one time Forfar's staple industry.

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

Davit Lunan's father went to a tattie roup at Tilliedrum and thoughtlessly died there."

The Forfarians carried the body in a closed coffin as far as what they said was the parish boundary. The Kirriemarians went to receive it, but refused to advance one inch beyond what they said was the parish boundary.

"... and not a foot would either advance into the other's territory. For half a day the coffin lay unclaimed, and the two parties sat scowling at each other. Neither dared move. Gloaming had stolen into the valley when Dite Deuchars of Tilliedrum rose to his feet and deliberately spat upon the coffin. A stone whizzed through the air ; and then the ugly spectacle was presented, in the grey night, of a dozen mutes fighting with their poles over a coffin. There was blood on the shoulders that bore Tammas's remains to Thrums."

That was the famous battle of Cabbyclatch.

In February, 1872, the Barrie family was back in Kirriemuir, David Barrie, who was now in his fifty-eighth year, having successfully applied for the post of chief clerk in Messrs. Stewart and Ogilvy's new jute factory, which had just been built on the banks of the Gairie. He rented the house known as "Strathview," which faced what was afterwards to be known the world over as "The Cottage on the Brae." On the other side of the Forfar Road, looking south, stood the farm of T'nowhead.

“SOMETHING WILL GET IN”

David Barrie, Margaret Ogilvy and Jane Anne were to live in “Strathview” till the end of their days, and the house will be for all time associated with the final scenes of *Margaret Ogilvy*.

The return of the Barrie family to Kirriemuir meant another school for young James. He was sent for a very short time to Webster’s Seminary. This is the time to which he refers in the dedication to *Peter Pan*, a year out, however, in his reckoning :

“Here is that boy again some four years older, and the reading he is munching feverishly is about desert islands ; he calls them wrecked islands. He buys his sanguinary tales surreptitiously in penny numbers. I see a change coming over him ; he is blanching as he reads in the high-class magazine, *Chatterbox*, a fulmination against such literature, ‘penny dreadfuls,’ and sees that unless his greed for islands is quenched he is for ever lost. With gloaming he steals out of the house, his library bulging beneath his palpitating waistcoat. I follow like his shadow, as indeed I am, and watch him dig a hole in a field at Pathhead farm (T’nowhead to the rest of the world) and bury his islands in it.”

After a very brief time at home, James was sent to stay with an uncle in Motherwell, the Rev. David Ogilvy, his mother’s only brother, and minister of the Dalziel Free Church there. In the autumn of 1873 he was enrolled as a scholar in Dumfries Academy. He was sent there where he would be under the eye of his brother Alex, who had recently

been appointed Inspector of Schools for Dumfries and district.

Barrie was very happy in Dumfries. In 1924, when he received the freedom of the town, he declared that the five years he spent at the Academy were probably the happiest in his life, "for indeed I loved the place." He haunted an old bookshop which belonged to a Mr. Anderson; his brother, Sir James Anderson, had been captain of the *Great Eastern*, which laid the first Atlantic cable. Barrie devoured, when in funds, "penny dreadfuls" (the warning of *Chatterbox* completely forgotten apparently), "magazines containing exclusively sanguinary matter, largely tales about heroic highwaymen and piracy on the high seas." This must have shocked the young ladies of Wallasey High School to whom he made the awful confession, many years later, as he pondered over the sins of his early youth, but he must have found a certain consolation in knowing that his friend "R. L. S.," whom he never saw but whom he dearly loved, was another like himself. And the disease lasted much longer with Stevenson. When he was in his forties, and an exile in Samoa, Stevenson wrote to Barrie about a visit to a bookseller's in Sydney. He would have none of the latest books, but demanded *Sixteen-String Jack*, *The Footpad*, or *Bloody Bill the Buccaneer*.

In Dumfries Barrie saw his first famous man—Thomas Carlyle, "in his great shovel hat and cloak and thunderous staff—Jove coming down for a stroll in his favourite county." Carlyle used to come to Dumfries to visit his sister and a literary

friend, Thomas Aird, but although young Barrie took off his cap to him scores of times in the hope of eliciting a word, the Sage of Chelsea, who had been morose and lonely since the death of his wife, took not the slightest notice, but stalked moodily past. Whether Barrie read much of Carlyle at this time is a matter of mere surmise, but he certainly read Ballantyne and Fenimore Cooper. In fact, it was through Fenimore Cooper that Barrie made his first friend at Dumfries Academy. A boy came up and looked him over from head to foot :

“He said the one word ‘Pathfinder,’ showing that he was, like myself, luckily an admirer of Fenimore Cooper. I replied with the same brevity ‘Chingachgook.’ ‘Hawkeye,’ said he. ‘The Sarpint,’ I replied. ‘I knew you had read about them,’ he said, ‘as soon as I saw you.’ I asked him how he knew, and he said he knew by my cut. I was uncertain what a ‘cut’ was—I am not certain that I know now—but when he said he liked my cut I had the sense to say that I liked his cut too. . . . ‘Do you remember,’ he asked, ‘how Pathfinder laughed?’ And I said, ‘Yes, he laughed so softly that no-one could hear it.’ ‘Listen, then,’ said he, and when I replied that I could hear nothing, he said triumphantly, ‘Of course you can’t—that was me laughing like Pathfinder—I always do it that way now.’ And so we swore friendship because we liked each other’s cut, and any time we fell out after that was if I laughed like Pathfinder.”

To his new friend he confided a tremendous secret—he had written a novel. He refers to this novel in *Margaret Ogilvy*. It was a three-volume affair, apparently, and it was actually submitted to a publisher.

“The publisher replied that the sum for which he would print it was a hundred and—however that was not the important point (I had sixpence): where he stabbed us both was in writing that he considered me a ‘clever lady.’ I replied stiffly that I was a gentleman. . . . It was a very cynical thing, entitled *A Child of Nature*—she was not really that kind. It was a tale of Dumfries. A long thing, one hundred thousand words. A year ago I came upon the manuscript, and, you will be relieved to hear, gently tore it up, just in case it should fall into the wrong hands, you know. My friend liked the story, and was always begging me to read the new chapter to him, especially if it was a love chapter. I got the best of my love scenes out of the novels by sparkling lady authors which I read with my eyes starting out of my head in Mr. Anderson’s library.”

But this novel was not the sum total of his literary activities at Dumfries Academy. He contributed “Reckolections of a Schoolmaster: Edited by James Barrie, M.A., A.S.S., LL.D.,” to the School magazine, *The Clown*, which was then edited by Wellwood Anderson, the bookseller’s son. Curious how this schoolmaster reappears in Barrie’s work.

He wrote plays as well. In the *Peter Pan* dedica-

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tion, he tells us about his “ beginning as an amateur playwright,” with “ that noble mouthful, *Bandolero the Bandit*.” Wellwood Anderson, who was President of the Dumfries Amateur Dramatic Society, had seen a play in Edinburgh, *Off the Line*. When he came back to Dumfries he would talk about nothing else, and proposed to his friend Barrie, who was Secretary of the Dramatic Society, that they should produce their own version of it. They did so, and *Bandolero the Bandit* preceded it as a curtain raiser.

“ One thinks of Barrie’s first attempt at play-writing, *Off the Line*, which was produced in the Christmas holidays of the session 1876-7, under the patronage of the masters. It aroused the ire of a stern old United Presbyterian minister who was a member of the School Board, and who at its next meeting gave vent to his feelings and protested against such a thing being allowed in the school. He declared that though he had neither seen nor read the play it was ‘ immoral,’ because he understood that in it were ‘ two awful villains ! ’ This led to a paper-war in the local journals. Somehow the reverend gentleman dragged in the name of Professor Blackie. Shortly afterwards the vivacious Professor came to lecture in the Mechanics Hall in support of his pet scheme of establishing a Gaelic Chair in Edinburgh University, for which, by the way, he said ‘ Her Majesty, decent woman, had given £20.’ But as he strode up and down the platform, he launched forth about ‘ the storm in a teacup ’ and invited the minister

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—who, however, was not present, though members of his family were—to come onto the platform and he would ‘pound him to a jelly.’ ”¹

Barrie wrote another play called *The Weavers*, in which he made his “only appearance as an actor.” He was cast for the part of Adele, a damsel “radiant with beauty,” whose hair was “attached to her hat.” It was in Dumfries that :

“When the shades of night began to fall, certain young mathematicians changed their skins, crept up walls and down trees and became pirates in a sort of Odyssey, that was long afterwards to become the play of *Peter Pan*. For our escapades in a certain Dumfries garden, which is enchanted ground to me, were certainly the genesis of that nefarious work.”

But the happy, carefree Dumfries Academy school days came to an end, and young Barrie made what is often the decisive step in a Scotsman’s career. He went to Edinburgh University—not as so many Scottish boys have done, with the intention of entering the ministry, but with the idea of studying law. But David Masson had something to say to that, and within a very short time Barrie’s final course was set.

¹ Quoted from an account of the incident by one of Barrie’s contemporaries at the school. See Kennedy’s *Thrums and the Barrie Country*.

CHAPTER III

“CORP,” SAID TOMMY FIRMLY,
“I’VE SET SAIL!”

THE life of a student at a Scottish University in those days was no bed of roses. Many of the students attending classes were poor—almost incredibly poor; they had few social amenities, or none at all. They lived in cheap lodgings, stinted themselves of clothes and food, herded mainly among themselves, and made few contacts that might help them in after life. They supported this life because many of them came from homes that were poor in the world’s goods but rich in faith and idealism. They had gone to the university because they believed that they had a “call” to higher service, and were able to go there either through their own painful endeavours or because others, who believed in them, had pinched and saved and toiled to send them there. And in times of deep depression, when the immediate present seemed black and hopeless and the future a very mirage, they were sustained by the thought of some hard-working shoemaker, or weaver, who, having been unable to go to the university himself, was living there vicariously in his son. There was the mother too—the mother who, perhaps, had done even more than the father to make the son a student. The Scottish students in Barrie’s days had a great responsibility and felt it; and it was the knowledge of this responsibility that made them turn out the men they afterwards became. Were they unhappy? Not in the least. Listen to what Barrie told the

readers of *The Nottingham Journal* ; his testimony is one among thousands :

“ I knew three undergraduates who lodged together in a dreary house at the top of a dreary street, two of whom used to study until two in the morning, while the third slept. When they shut up their books they woke Number 3, who arose, dressed, and studied till breakfast-time. Among the many advantages of this arrangement the chief was that, as they were dreadfully poor, one bed did for the three. Two of them occupied it at one time, and the third at another. Terrible position ? Frightful destitution ? Not a bit of it. The Millennium was in those days. If life was at the top of a hundred steps, if students occasionally died of hunger and hard work combined, if the midnight oil only burned to show a ghastly face, ‘ weary and worn,’ if lodgings were cheap and dirty, and dinners few and far between, life was still real and earnest, in many cases it did not turn out an empty dream.”

As R. F. Murray, the student poet of St. Andrews University, sings :

That was a barren time at best,
Its fruits were few ;
But fruits and flowers had keener zest
And fresher hue.

Life has not since been wholly vain
And now I bear
Of wisdom plucked from joy and pain
Some slender share.

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But, howsoever rich the store,
I’d lay it down,
To feel upon my back once more
The old red gown.

One side of the story of Barrie’s life in Edinburgh can be pieced together from his little volume, *An Edinburgh Eleven*. This booklet, which appeared in 1889, consisted of a series of “ Pencil Portraits from College Life,” by “ Gavin Ogilvy.” The sub-title was, however, not quite accurate. Blackie and Calderwood, Masson, Campbell-Fraser, Chrystal, Tait, Sellar, and Mr. J. Thompson were academic figures in the strict meaning of the word, but Lord Rosebery, R. L. Stevenson and the Rev. W. C. Smith were not. These “ pencil portraits ” are drawn with a light touch. They are humorous, satirical in a gentle way, droll too ; developed work, it must be remembered, written not by an undergraduate too near and too immature to do justice to his elders, but by an experienced journalist, looking back somewhat wistfully across the years. Wordsworth explains that his idea of poetry is “ emotion recollected in tranquillity,” and that, once the seed of a poem is sown, it is no longer the poet who is responsible for its development.

But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes—will sometimes leap
From hiding-places ten years deep ;
Or haunts me with familiar face,
Returning like a ghost unlaid,
Until the debt I owe be paid.

That is Barrie’s way, as it was Margaret Ogilvy’s.

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That is why his novels have such a quiet air about them. In his beginnings Barrie was not a creative artist ; Robert Louis Stevenson, in one of these critical *obiter dicta* in which he excelled, summed him up rarely, in a letter to Henry James : “ Stuff in that young man, but he must see and not be too funny. Genius in him, but there’s a journalist at his elbow.” Had it not been for his mother he would have remained a witty and clever journalist. It was Margaret Ogilvy who changed him. Barrie was not naturally at home in the past ; if he had been, the historical associations of his native place would have inspired him to go exploring there. It was his mother who took him back to old Kirriemuir—the Kirriemuir she had known in her youth. She taught him to see it with her eyes, to interpret life as she knew it, to write down experiences through which she had passed herself, or through which she had known others to pass, to analyse emotions that were at once simple and profound. Barrie lived in his novels the life Margaret Ogilvy had known, and when she died he turned his back sadly on the familiar scenes and went exploring by himself. He tells us all about it in *Margaret Ogilvy* :

“ The reason my books deal with the past instead of with the life I myself have known is simply this, that I soon grow tired of writing tales unless I can see a little girl, of whom my mother has told me, wandering confidently through the pages. . . . The people I see passing up and down these wynds, sitting night-capped on their barrow

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shafts, hobbling in their blacks to church on Sunday, are less those I saw in my childhood than their fathers and mothers who did these things in the same way when my mother was young.”

The Edinburgh sketches, however, are not mere journalism ; their humour is something new, as fresh as was Charles Lamb’s in his somewhat chequered journalistic days. For example : “ The first time I ever saw Lord Rosebery was in Edinburgh when I was a student, and I flung a clod of earth at him. He was a peer : those were my politics.” In Sellar’s class there was one student who was a puzzle to the professor because “ he was higher sitting than standing : when the Professor asked him to stand up, he stood down.” When Blackie noticed any physical peculiarity about a student, a lisp, for example, or a glass eye, he at once invited him to breakfast. Blackie’s amazing vitality struck Barrie. “ Did you ever watch him marching along Princes Street on a warm day ? ” he asks, “ when every other person was broiling in the sun ? His head is well thrown back, the staff, grasped in the middle, jerks back and forward like a weaver’s shuttle, and the plaid flies in the breeze. Other people’s clothes are hanging limp. Blackie carries his breeze with him.” In *Better Dead* Barrie was less kindly disposed to the “ man with the young head on old shoulders.” In that clever farcical story the hero, Andrew Riach, saw the Professor one day in Piccadilly with his plaid, humming “ Scots wha ha’e,” and the sight of him,

“with head thrown back . . . and chest inflated,” singing himself “into a martial ecstasy and . . . strutting along like a band of bagpipers with a clan behind him,” was more than flesh and blood could stand. But before the agent of the S.D.W.S.P. (Society for Doing Without Some People) could lay hands on him, the Professor quickened his pace and was lost among the crowd.

Campbell-Fraser, a picturesque figure with a great patriarchal beard, and flowing locks, who wore an enormous broad-brimmed black hat, made a deeper impression on Barrie ; but only because he found something comic in mataphysics.

“ I see him rising in a daze from his chair, and putting his hands through his hair. ‘ Do I exist ? ’ he said thoughtfully, ‘ strictly so-called ? ’ The students . . . looked a little startled. This was a matter that had not previously disturbed them. Still, if the Professor was in doubt, there must be something in it. He began to argue it out, and an uncomfortable silence held the room in awe. If he did not exist, the chances were that they did not exist either. It was thus a personal question. The Professor glanced round slowly for an illustration. ‘ Am I a table ? ’ A pained look travelled over the class. Was it just possible that they were all tables ? ”

One result of attending Campbell-Fraser’s class was that Barrie was able to prove to another student in half an hour that the student did not exist. “ He got quite frightened, and I can still see his white

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face as he sat staring at me in the gloaming.” This, he adds, “ shows what metaphysics can do.”

Professor Calderwood is another victim of Barrie’s gentle satire. In a rash moment he told his class that he considered that there was “ a great deal of moral philosophy in ‘ The Dead March in Saul,’ and went so far as to say that he could excuse any student for being absent from a lecture, who had been listening to it.” The consequence was that there was an unprecedented number of absences when the roll was called. The Professor was not long left in doubt as to the cause. Letters began to arrive from the students. “ Mr. McNaughton (Bench 7) presents his compliments to Professor Calderwood, and begs to state that his absence from the class yesterday was owing to his being elsewhere, hearing ‘ The Dead March in Saul.’ ” Another student apologized for being absent, but hoped that the Professor would excuse him as he was “ unavoidably detained at home, practising ‘ The Dead March in Saul.’ ” Another was on his way to class when he heard “ The Dead March in Saul ” being played in the street, and his absence was due to his being too much affected. “ It is indeed a grand march.—Yours faithfully, JOHN ROBBIE.”

But it was Masson—that “ Gulliver in criticism ”—who influenced Barrie most, at least on the literal and cultural side. The first day he saw Masson,

“ was the opening of the session when the fees were paid, and a whisper ran round the quadrangle that (he) had set off home with three

hundred one-pound notes stuffed into his trouser pockets. There was a solemn swell of awe-struck students to the gates, and some of us could not help following him. He took his pockets coolly. When he stopped it was at a second-hand bookstall where he rummaged for a long time. Eventually he pounced upon a dusty dragged little volume, and went off proudly with it beneath his arm. He seemed to look suspiciously at strangers now, but it was not the money but the book he was keeping guard over. His pockets, however, were unmistakably bulging out. I resolved to go in for literature."

But Masson had not yet done with Barrie. He influenced him in another direction.

"Lecturing on Chatterton one day, he remarked, with a slight hesitation, that had the poet mixed a little more in company and smoked, his morbidness would not have poisoned him. This turned my thoughts to smoking, because I meant to be a Chatterton, but greater. Since then the Professor has warned me against smoking too much. He was smoking at the time."

With the idea of becoming a great man of letters as speedily as possible, Barrie let his hair grow long, until the students behind him, who not only wished to hear, but to see the Professor as well, sent him a polite note containing sixpence. "The students sitting behind you present their compliments and beg that you will get your hair cut with the enclosed,



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as it interferes with their view of the Professor.” A great man, Masson. When he was annoyed by some of his students talking, he would pause for a moment and “ then with the light in his eye that some photographer ought to catch, he would hope that his lectures were not disturbing their conversation.”

A tranquil life and a happy one, but Barrie’s imagination during this time was not idle.

“ ‘ There he is again,’ he writes of himself in the *Peter Pan* dedication, ‘ ten years older an undergraduate now and craving to be a real explorer, one of those who do things instead of prating of them, but otherwise unaltered ; he might be painted at twenty on top of a mast, in his hand a spy-glass through which he rakes the horizon for an elusive strand.’ ”

Another memory of his student days is found in a rare little volume, *The New Amphion*, which was published in 1886, with the motto *Movit Amphion lapides canendo*. “ *The New Amphion*, being the Book of the Edinburgh Union Fancy Fair, in which are contained sundry artistick, instructive, and diverting matters, all now made publick for the first time,” contained among other clever and amusing little things, “ The Scotch Student’s Dream,” by Barrie.

The inevitable debating society was another of his diversions. The society to which Barrie belonged had the distinction of being not only the smallest in

the University, but the longest-winded. He was once nearly expelled for not paying his subscription. One of its prominent members was called Gregory. "What," he asks, "has become of Gregory? He was one of those men who professors say have a brilliant future before them, and who have not since been heard of."

Two other men had a profound influence on young Barrie in Edinburgh—Dr. Walter Smith of the Free High, and Dr. Alexander Whyte of Free St. George's.

" 'During the four winters another and I were in Edinburgh,' he writes, 'we never entered any but Free Churches' (i.e. Presbyterian churches which were products of the Disruption of 1843), 'and even when they were limited to two—St. George's and the Free High.' "

Barrie, with the home influence still strong on him, was a most regular and consistent church-goer, and for these two famous divines he had the profoundest admiration and respect. "The one" (Dr. Whyte) "is always ready to go on fire, and the other is sometimes at hand with a jug of cold water. Whyte was 'not only a Gladstonian, but Gladstonian: his enthusiasm carries him on as steam drives the engine. . . . The strength and encouragement they have been to the young is the grand outstanding fact of their ministeries,' although 'their influence is, of course, chiefly noticeable in the divinity men, who make the Bible class so remarkable.' "

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“ Whyte’s Bible Class ” was famous in Barrie’s day, and for many years afterwards. It was one of the great spiritual and intellectual centres of Edinburgh life. And Barrie, like thousands of other young men, willingly came under the spell of his famous fellow-townsmen—the greatest experimentalist of his generation and the last of the Puritans.

When Dr. Whyte lay dead at the beginning of 1921, Barrie paid a beautiful tribute to his memory, in a letter to Robertson Nicoll :

“ Do you remember how, early in the life of the *British Weekly*, I wrote some papers for you on Scottish worthies, which were afterwards published as a little volume under the title, ‘ An Edinburgh Eleven.’ . . . When I read that Dr. Whyte was dead I unearthed, with some difficulty, a copy of that volume to read what I had written of him so long ago, and to my bewilderment I find that he was not one of the eleven, though his name occurs. How that came about I do not know—he might as well have been their captain, he or Masson, for those were certainly to me the two great names in Edinburgh at that time. Perhaps he seemed too near to me, and too dear, to be written about, for I had known him all my life, and sat at his feet from the beginning thereof, and always felt an awe of that leonine head. To know him was to know what the Covenanters were like in their most splendid hours. This may seem to lay too much

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stress on the sternness of him. He could be stern certainly, and then, if you were its object, you felt a gale of wind blowing that you were not likely to forget, but it was a face far more often lit up by delight in something fine that he had discovered ; and wherever there were fine things he was the man to dig them up. He came to announce his discoveries with greater joy on his face than, I think, I have ever seen on the face of any other man. The fervour of his face, the beneficence of it, they will shine on like a lamp. His greatest genius lay in 'uplift.' He uplifted more men and women than any other Scotsman of his time."

Barrie graduated M.A. in 1882. He had spent four happy years at Edinburgh. Speaking as Chancellor of his old University, when wealth and fame had come his way in lavish abundance, he told his audience in a passage of tender and poignant reminiscence that he never heard of or revisited "the walls one loves when one has done with them," without thinking of himself as he was the day he matriculated, "an awestruck boy, passing and repassing the gates, frightened to venture inside, breathing heavily at sight of janitors, Scott and Carlyle in the air." But now the young graduate was faced with a new problem—that of earning a living. On one thing he had made up his mind : "There could be no humdrum profession for me ; literature was my game." To get a start was the difficulty.

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For a time Barrie kicked his heels in Kirriemuir, resting from the recent fatigues of University examinations, and getting accustomed to the fact that he was now an M.A., a degree which, in those far-off days, at least, had a marketable value. He discussed his plans with his mother, building, no doubt, wonderful castles in the air, walked through the Caddam Wood, across the Hill, down the Roods, giving perhaps a casual glance at the Auld Licht Manse in the hollow, or at the whitewashed cottage on the brae, which he had to pass on his way home. So far Thrums had stirred no spark in him and Margaret Ogilvy had never dreamt of opening up her trunkful of memories for her son to examine. His ideas about literature, or what he might do in literature, were still very vague. He felt he had wit, talent, and ambition ; that he could write, and that writing attracted him more than any other profession he had ever considered. But it had never dawned on him that he possessed anything beyond talent. Nor was he to make the discovery immediately. And while waiting for something to turn up he fell in love. That is to say, he fell in love in the Barrie way. The lady lived in Kirriemuir and was “ the first lovely thing ” he ever saw “ in young manhood.” He never spoke to her, but “ her name was of the kind that Wordsworth loved.” He was just about to tell it to his Kirriemuir audience when—“ now isn’t that sad ? ” he found he had to proceed to the next item on the programme. He wrote a poem to the young lady, however, which he dropped in the post office, after hesitating so long that he

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thought he was attracting attention. The poem began :

Is Venus dead ? Methinks she must
Have left to you her face.

Meanwhile his family showed little enthusiasm for literature ; they were in fact definitely opposed to it. The literary profession " was not kindly thought of by those who wished me well." His mother " drained all available libraries for books about those who go to London to live by their pens, and they all tell the same shuddering tale." It took a long time to convince her that London was not quite " a monster that licked up country youths as they stepped from the train." He did so by taking her on imaginary trips through the metropolis by the aid of a map which he drew specially—an odd anticipation of Peter Pan's famous map of Kensington Gardens. The two of them would gleefully call at an imaginary post office, " to wire my father and sister that we should not be home till later." They winked to his books in shop windows, they lunched at restaurants, taking care not to call it dinner ; they greeted Mr. Alfred Tennyson with a familiar " How do ? " as they passed him in Regent Street, and finally called at the publisher's office for a cheque, and went straight to a shop to buy a seal-skin coat for " a middling old lady." But at first, as he goes on to tell us in *Margaret Ogilvy* :

" I had one person only on my side, an old tailor, one of the fullest men I have known, and

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quite the best talker.¹ He was a bachelor . . . a lean man, pallid of face, his legs drawn up when he walked, as if he was ever carrying something in his lap ; his walks were of the shortest, from the tea-pot on the hob to the board on which he stitched, from the board to the hob, and so to bed. . . . I seem to see him now, and he is somewhat dizzy in the odd atmosphere ; in one hand he carries a box-iron . . . ; a faint smell of singed cloth goes by with him. This man had heard of my set of photographs of the poets and asked for a sight of them, which led to our first meeting. I remember how he spread them out on his board, and after looking long at them, turned his gaze on me and said solemnly :

What can I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own ?

These lines of Cowley were new to me, but the sentiment was not new, and I marvelled how the old tailor could see through me so well. So it was strange to me to discover presently that he had not been thinking of me at all, but of his own young days, when that couplet sang in his head, and he, too, had thirsted to set off for Grub Street, but was afraid, and while he hesitated old age came, and then Death, and found him grasping a box-iron.

“ I hurried home with the mouthful, but neighbours had dropped in, and this was for her

¹ Uncle of Dr. Alexander Whyte.

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ears only, so I drew her to the stair, and said imperiously :

What can I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own ?

It was an odd request with which to draw her from a tea-table, and she must have been surprised, but I think she did not laugh, and in after years she would repeat the lines fondly, with a flush on her soft face."

Then very humbly—and Barrie, despite the great fame that has come his way is essentially a very humble man without a thought of self-aggrandisement or self-advertisement—he adds :

"For my part I can smile at one of those two figures on the stair now, having long given up the dream of being for ever known, and seeing myself more akin to my friend the tailor ; for as he was found at the end of his board, so I hope shall I be found at my hand-loom, doing honestly the work that suits me best. Who shall know so well as I that it is but a hand-loom compared to the great guns that reverberate through the age to come ? But she who stood with me on the stair that day was a very simple woman, accustomed all her life to making the most of small things, and I weaved sufficiently well to please her, which has been my only steadfast ambition since I was a little boy."

Then *The Nottingham Journal* advertised for a leader-writer, and Barrie, having discovered what

a leader-writer was, applied for the post and got it. For a year he remained in Nottingham, writing his leaders, that is to say, writing “readably, authoritatively, and always in three paragraphs on a subject he (knew) nothing about.” In addition to his daily leader, he contributed from time to time a special Monday article signed “Hippomanes,” as well as a column of notes by “The Modern Peripatetic.” He discussed politics, wrote amusing articles on “Male Nursery Maids,” “The Leafy Month,” “Printers’ Errors,” “Private Theatricals,” and one verse skit in the manner of Southey’s “The Battle of Blenheim,” with the refrain, “It was a famous victory,” on the St. Mary’s Ward Conservative Dinner of Tuesday, April 17th, 1883. The titles of some of his other sketches show the direction in which his thoughts were continually straying—“The Complete Playgoer,” “A Study in Tinsel,” “Lear’s Fool,” “Stage Tricks,” “An Old Morality Play,” “Principal Boys.” While he was working on *The Nottingham Journal* Barrie applied for a sub-editorship of *The Liverpool Daily Post*. Sir Alexander Jeans, the editor of the *Daily Post*, in whose hands the appointment lay, selected another candidate, however, and, thanks to this mistake in judgment, Barrie continued quietly to make himself in the seclusion of his rooms.

In *When a Man’s Single*, we have the pseudo-biographical account of Barrie’s Nottingham experiences. It was published in October, 1888, six months after the appearance of *Auld Licht Idylls*, and calls itself “a tale of literary life.” As a novel the book

is a poor one ; as pseudo-biography it is amusing. The story opens with a Thrums background, and the first two chapters, where the author is writing about people who are more like himself inside than other people, are done with a firm hand. After that he begins to wander. At one moment he is realistic, then he is sentimental, then farcical, then non-sensical. He jumps from the Wigwam Club to the Thames and introduces us to preposterous baronets, absurd journalists, standardised heroines. Barrie himself gives the reason for its inchoateness ; it had not been properly thought out beforehand. "I expect that when I started Rob Angus," he explains in the Introduction, "I meant him to have a less strenuous time, but he fell in love, and once they fall in love there is no saying what our heroes will do." Only two chapters had been written when it began to appear serially. Barrie is not an author who can be rushed. "Soon I was only a chapter ahead. It is a method of publication I hope never to adopt again."

The hero of the story is Rob Angus. He has taken his dead sister's little girl, Davy, under his guardianship, and when she is drowned, in a manner which recalls Wordsworth's Lucy Gray, Rob goes south and gets a post on the *Silchester Mirror*. In the *Silchester Mirror* we find a replica of *The Nottingham Journal* : in Rob we easily recognise Barrie himself. When the office learns of his appointment the following conversation takes place :

" 'He's a Yorkshireman, I believe,' continued the crafty Protheroe.

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“ ‘ That’s all you know,’ said the foreman, first glancing to see if Mr. Liquorish’s door was shut. ‘ Mr. George Frederick has told me all about him. He’s a Scotsman called Angus, that’s never been out of his native country.’ ”

Barrie was lonely in Nottingham ; but he was lonely by his own choice. His aim was to get to London, to make a name for himself there. So he worked hard out of office hours. He wrote articles and sketches which he sent regularly to London, and just as regularly were they returned. Discouraging enough, but Barrie refused to be discouraged. He tried descriptive articles instead of witty and nonsensical ones. At last he had his reward. He sent an article on “ Gretna Green Revisited ” to the editor of the *Illustrated London News*, and, to his great delight, it was accepted. No more “ wooing literature with contributions that were all misfits ” ; no more projects for volumes on the older satirists, Skelton, Tom Nash, and the others ; no more suggestions for papers on Mary Queen of Scots. Not that the Gretna Green article was in any way remarkable in a literary sense. On the contrary, students of sources would say that much of it was pure Stevenson :

“ There is no hope for Gretna. Springfield was and is the great glory of its inhabitants. Here ran the great wall of Adrian, the scene of many a tough fight in the days of stone weapons and skin-clad Picts. The Debatable Land, sung by Trouvère and Troubadour, is to-day but a sodden

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mass, in which no King Arthur strides fearfully away from the 'grim lady' of the bogs; and moss troopers, grim and gaunt and terrible, no longer whirl with lighted fire-brands into England. With a thousand stars the placid moon lies long drawn out, and drowned at the bottom of the Solway, without a love-sick maid to shed a tear; the chariots that once rattled and flashed along the now silent road were turned into firewood decades ago, and the runaways, from a Prince of Capua to a beggar-maid, are rotten and forgotten."

But it was not all Stevenson. Already the Barrie-to-be was there in the droll sketch of the old toll-house keeper, Beattie, who developed such a passion for marrying people that in his later days he never saw a man and a maid together without creeping up behind them and beginning the Marriage Service. The acceptance of the article gave Barrie confidence; it also gave him a new idea—the idea of writing something about a place he knew better than the Border country. "As unlooked for as a telegram" came the realization that there was "something quaint about his native place." "A boy who found that a knife had been put into his pocket in the night could not have been more surprised." "It seems odd," he writes in one of his Introductions, "but I am not the first nor the fiftieth who has left Thrums to seek the life-work that was all the time awaiting him at home."

Having conceived this idea, he wrote an article

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and sent it off to London. It was accepted by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, the editor of the *St. James’s Gazette*, and appeared on November 17th, 1884. Thus, in “ An Auld Licht Community,” Kirriemuir, or “ Thrums,” as Barrie after long and careful consideration decided to call it, came into the literary limelight. Greenwood asked for more. Barrie was afraid he had exhausted the subject, but cudgelled his brains for more. “ I sent him a marriage, and he took it, and then I tried him with a funeral, and he took it.” He wrote to his mother and asked her if she could remember any interesting things about Kirriemuir. That set her going. She racked her brains for memories which could be made into articles. His sisters took down the reminiscences, and posted them to James in Nottingham. Quiet excitement in the little Barrie household—James already a famous author. Later, when he came back to Kirriemuir for a time he made the further acquaintance of a somewhat remarkable local celebrity, James Donald. Donald was born in Kirriemuir in 1815. He lived through the Chartist agitation and became well known as a Chartist leader. A tall spare man who seemed to have neither relatives nor means of support, he was a born musician, a student of philosophy and literature, a writer of verse and prose and an admirable and witty talker with an inexhaustible fund of information and anecdote about Kirriemuir past and present. He was reputed to be something of an “ atheist,” or a freethinker, and held peculiar views about the transmigration of souls. He once said

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that if he had to live again, if he had the choice he would like to be one of Glasswell's "hennies." Glasswell was a local farmer who had the reputation of feeding his hens well. Barrie, like other Kirriemarians young and old, must often have drunk at Donald's well, but I question whether his contemporary, Margaret Ogilvy, would entirely have approved of the quality of the waters supplied there.

Then Barrie did a rash thing. Encouraged by his small successes in the *St. James's Gazette*, he wrote to Greenwood and asked, "Shall I come to London?" The reply was an emphatic "No." "So," says Barrie, "I went."

Then began a hard time, a time which, despite his later glorification of "the fun of working till the stars went out," and the joy of "not knowing a soul" in the city, Barrie admitted to his fellow townsmen, was almost enough to break a man. One can be too lonely in the city, and loneliness and discouragement are the breeding ground of morbid fancies.

"You can be too lonely in your first year in London. Once I thought I had murdered a man, a Chinaman. . . . I thought I put him in a great box, which I painted black, and got a spade and buried him in a back garden. When I came to I saw what had happened. It was no dream but I had sat too long night after night slaving at my lodgings.

"In the middle of the mantelshelf was a little box and the figure of a Chinaman, both a few

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inches high. I had stared at them till they assumed gigantic proportions. So it came about. The thinking I painted the box black is curious. I believe it came out of the days of my boyhood up here, when I sometimes sat with Eassie, the joiner, while he was making coffins.”

For four years he battled with himself and with the London editors. Greenwood continued to accept his “ Auld Licht ” sketches, but otherwise, apart from the “ Gretna Green ” article and mere free-lance *ephemera*, he had nothing to show whatsoever. Greenwood was for the ambitious young Scot both friend and critic ; without him Barrie would probably never have been heard of. In 1905, exactly twenty years after Barrie’s first appearance in Fleet Street, at a dinner given to Greenwood, the younger man made public acknowledgment of his debt :

“ However much the other members of the committee may love Mr. Greenwood,” he said, “ I love him more, for he invented me. . . . I bought my first silk hat when I came to London solely to impress him. In his honour we now take off every hat we have, but it was those first silk hats that meant the most. Old and battered are they now, but even they rise again and salute Mr. Greenwood.”

Not that these years were barren of friendships. He came to know Frederick William Robertson, editor of *Home Chimes*, Alexander Riach of the

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Daily Telegraph, and lastly Robertson Nicoll, who had founded the *British Weekly* in November, 1886, and who was in a very short time recognized as one of the ablest journalists in London. It was a fortunate accident that threw Nicoll and Barrie together with the happiest results for both. If Nicoll took to a man, he made him—provided that man had the root of the matter in him.

“His flair was extraordinary for discovering new authors who quickly became popular,” writes his biographer, T. H. Darlow. “Indeed, before long he fostered a literary movement, which was partly his own creation and partly one of the contributory sources of his influence. With patriotic discernment he found one Scotsman after another who introduced a fresh type of Scottish literature, and their books attained an immense circulation.”

It was in 1887 that Nicoll first met Barrie. Happening to be in Edinburgh in the early part of the year, he read in the *Evening Despatch*, which was now being edited by Alexander Riach, a burlesque account of the Assembly of the Free Church, in Inverness. At the moment Nicoll was looking for a contributor who could write “in a lively way on Scottish ecclesiastical affairs.” He asked Riach about the writer of the article, found out that he was a young journalist in London, that he was a regular contributor to the *Evening Despatch*, that he was a young fellow of great parts, that he was ambitious and had marked talent and a sense of style of his own, which distinguished

him from the ordinary ruck of journalists, and that he was the author of the Scottish sketches about the Auld Lights, which had been appearing lately in the *St. James’s Gazette*. Nicoll got into touch with Barrie, met him, and the two small men took to each other immediately. Nicoll invited Barrie to contribute to the *British Weekly*, and his first article in that journal appeared in July, 1887. It was entitled “ The Reverend Doctor Whyte, by an Outsider,” using the pseudonym, “ Gavin Ogilvy.” From now on “ Gavin Ogilvy ” became a regular contributor to the *British Weekly*, and in its pages, as well as in those of the *Edinburgh Evening Despatch*, are to be found some of Barrie’s cleverest and most amusing sketches. *When a Man’s Single* appeared in the *British Weekly* in serial form, and the sketches that were afterwards collected under the title, *An Edinburgh Eleven*. Nicoll encouraged him to write more Scottish sketches, published them in his paper, and suggested that he should collect the best of them both from the *St. James’s Gazette* and “ from a drawerful of rejected stories,” and offer them to a publisher. But fresh disappointment awaited Barrie. Not a publisher in London would look at the collection. “ I even offered it to certain firms as a gift, but they would not have it even at that.” It was Nicoll who came to the rescue.

“ I did my best to turn the ‘ Auld Licht ’ sketches into a book with my name on it,” Barrie tells us in *Margaret Ogilvy*, “ and at last pub-

lishers, sufficiently daring and more than sufficiently generous, were found for me by a dear friend " (Nicoll), " who made one woman very ' up-lifted.' He . . . had as large a part in making me a writer of books as the other " (Greenwood) " in determining what the books should be about."

With Nicoll as fairy-godfather, Barrie gradually evolved from the journalist into the creative artist. Fits of depression, self-doubtings, periods of introspection were succeeded by periods of elation and the joy of creation. He referred to these toilsome days—and nights, in a characteristic speech for the benefit of the Royal Literary Fund, in 1930 :

" I found even my old table there and the hole my foot had made in the mat. There I sat down in the old, joyous way to fight it out again with the stars. I think the days and nights that followed were about the happiest in my life, unless I except the days and nights I had spent long ago in the same place. You know what the feeling is. The little room as night advances get smaller and more kindly. The inkpot hopes to goodness it won't give out, the candle and the lamp come closer to serve your poor eyes. All of them are on your side, peeping, whispering. You have done it this time. Listen to the nightingale. They are ready to drop, next morning, a lodging-house tear when it turns out to be only a sparrow."

Mr. David Williamson, editor of the *Daily Mail*

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Year Book, gives us an interesting glimpse of Barrie in those early *British Weekly* days, when the “ Idylls ” were appearing. After describing Nicoll, all “ muffled up . . . with a Scottish accent that often puzzled the composers who brought him proofs,” he recalls Barrie, “ white-faced, nervous and shy. He took particular pains with proofs, realising that the dialect-conversation in his sketches lent itself readily to laughable errors.”

With the publication of *Auld Licht Idylls* in April, 1888, Barrie at once sprang into fame. But *Better Dead*, which is also pseudo-biographical and has for its background the journalistic days in London, preceded it by several months.

Barrie himself had a poor idea of *Better Dead*. “ Weighted with *An Edinburgh Eleven* it would rest very comfortably in a mill-dam,” he wrote in the Introduction to *Auld Licht Idylls*. But this is doing the novelette an injustice. It appealed to a certain class of readers and hit the taste of the day. The little book appeared in paper covers with a drawing of a silk-hatted individual lurking at a street corner, knife in hand, as two hapless pedestrians approach him. It is really an expansion of the humorous and witty articles which had appeared in the *St. James’s Gazette*, and is perhaps a hit at W. H. Mallock’s *Is Life Worth Living?* which everyone was reading at the moment. In Barrie’s extravaganza we meet the sort of clever people that Barrie must have been meeting, hear them talking about the topics which interested the public at the moment, listen to them making the most absurd proposals, see their eyelids

flicker ever so slightly as they spin their brilliant nonsense. *Better Dead* is an unique trifle; "spoofing" of the very highest order.

Who but Barrie could have thought out such an absurd table of contents: "Engaged?"; "The S.D.W.S.P.?"; "The Great Social Question?"; "Woman's Rights?"; "Dynamitered?"; "A Celebrity at Home?"; "Experimenting?"; "A Lost Opportunity?"; "The Root of the Matter?"; "The Old, Old Story?" Each chapter heading is put in the form of a question and has no relation to the text. The opening scene in Wheens, presently to become Thrums, is unmistakably Barrie. We have been told about the chairs already, and we are positive that we have seen that engraving of the boy in velveteens, entitled "Boyhood of Bunyan," in a room in the Tenements. The hero of the story, Andrew Riach, is not only vaguely suggestive of Barrie himself, but he is an anticipation of John Shand. Andrew has decided to leave Wheens for the larger stage of London. He intends to become private secretary to a member of the Cabinet and to write for the press in his spare time—if he has any. He tells his minister what he has decided to do, and the latter, anticipating David Wylie, suggests that Riach should come to an understanding with Clarrie before he goes:

"Clarrie rose to go when she heard her name. The love-light was in her eyes, but Andrew did not open the door for her, for he was a Scotch



Francis Caird Inglis

AN EARLY PORTRAIT OF SIR JAMES BARRIE
BY SIR WILLIAM NICHOLSON

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graduate. Besides, she might one day be his wife.

“ He came to the point at the garden gate. First, he ‘stooped and kissed her upturned face.’ Then,

“ ‘If a herring and a half,’ he said anxiously, ‘cost three half-pence, how many will you get for elevenpence ? ’

“ Clarrie was mute.

“ Andrew shuddered ; he felt he was making a mistake.”

However, he went to London and tried to get his Secretaryship. He called at Gladstone’s house, but unfortunately “ all his private secretaryships were already filled. Andrew was not greatly disappointed though he was too polite to say so. In politics he was a granite-headed Radical ; and on several questions, such as the Church and Free Education, the two men were hopelessly at variance.”

Journalism proved equally disappointing, and *The Standard* had even the audacity to return him some other person’s manuscript “ and seemed to think it would do as well.” Then he fell in with the S.D.W.S.P. and things began to take a turn for the better with him. The S.D.W.S.P., or, The Society for Doing Without Some People, existed for the sole purpose of removing people who had made themselves obnoxious to its members. Lord Randolph Churchill, “ Joe ” Chamberlain, Henry Labouchere, W. T. Stead, W. H. Mallock, Mrs. Langtry, Mary Anderson were some of them. De Quincey

had a similar idea in "Murder as a Fine Art," and more recently Stevenson in *The New Arabian Nights* had given Barrie some hints. Closer still was the song, "We've got him on the list," in *The Mikado*, which Barrie had no doubt heard. Finally Andrew Riach, after a series of amazing escapades as a member of the Society, almost fell a victim himself, but made his escape, and "domesticated and repentant . . . renounced the Devil and all *her* works. . . ." And the story ended happily.

Although Barrie professed to have a low opinion of his extravaganza, he made the following confession about it, much later :

"I have a sentimental interest in *Better Dead*, for it was my first, published when I had small hope of getting anyone to accept the Scotch, and there was a week when I loved to carry it in my pocket, and did not think it a dead weight. Once I almost saw it find a purchaser. She was a pretty girl, and it lay on a bookstall, and she read some pages and smiled, and then retired, and came back and began another chapter. Several times she did this and I stood in the background trembling with hope and fear. At last she went away without the book, but I am still of opinion that, had it been just a little bit better, she would have bought it."

The critics spoke kindly of *Better Dead*, one even suggesting humorously that it was a collaboration by Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. The book is

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topical, and, as is inevitable with satires of this type, many of its allusions have little or no meaning for readers of to-day, and many of its victims have been forgotten by the twentieth century. But *Better Dead* has qualities which give it a place in the Barrie canon. There are people who obviously have strayed from their Thrums setting—Riach’s uncle, for example, the weaver who read Herodotus in the original and starved himself to buy books and talk about them. And Riach himself who, during the summer vacation, “weaved sufficient money to keep himself during the winter on porridge and potatoes.” The reflective passages, too, are typically Barriesque: “This is the saddest spectacle in life, a brave young man’s first meeting with the world. How rapidly the milk turns to gall.” Most people will sympathize with his sarcastic references to the so-called “comic” writers whose favourite themes are teetotalism and spinsters. In *Better Dead* there are two phrases which sound like the authentic Barrie: “a determination of words in the mouth”; “Mr. Eassie . . . looked difficulties in the face and passed them by.”

CHAPTER IV

"THE MAN FOR MY MONEY"

THE years 1888 and 1889 were memorable years in Barrie's life. They saw the publication of *Auld Licht Idylls*, and of *A Window in Thrums*. The *Spectator* said that the "Idylls" was "at once the most successful, the most truly literary, and the most realistic attempt that has been made for years, if not for generations, to reproduce humble Scottish life." The *Academy* said it was "not only the best book dealing exclusively with Scotch humble life, but the only book of its kind, deserving to be classed as literature, that has been published for at least a quarter of a century." What impressed the *Athenæum* critic was the graphic description "of the storm-beaten, snow-laden clachan of grey stones, and . . . the observant insight displayed by the solitary and philosophic dominie who tells the tale." But, no doubt, pleased and flattered as he must have been by tributes such as these, which came from such a source, Barrie, like most young Scotsmen on whom high honour falls, was even more delighted that he had the approval of a distinguished fellow-townsmen and that he had caused a most unusual flutter in the Kirriemuir dovecots. Dr. Alexander Whyte immediately saw the truth of these sketches, and in the report of an interview which appeared in *The Young Man* he declared with his usual enthusiasm :

"All of us in the town know the characters Mr. Barrie describes, and had taken them and their

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eccentricities just as a complete part of our town life, scarcely worth notice. But when a man of genius put them into print that made all the difference. The Kirriemuir people were beyond the average for shrewdness and intelligence. Some of the working men were deeply read in literature and philosophy. Mr. Barrie has thoroughly grasped the characters of the little community, with all their humour and pathos. ‘ Thrums ’ is a true picture of my native place.”

But even lovelier to him must have been the rejoicing in the little home circle over his success. Dour old David would naturally say nothing about it to his cronies, and his cronies would never mention the matter to him. But he knew they were talking about James, and suspected that some of the things they said were not entirely complimentary. But he could afford to ignore them, and walked with his head in the air. What mattered chiefly was that one woman was very “ uplifted.” And another thing that was of tremendous importance was that the success of the “ Idylls ” had put money in Barrie’s purse. This meant that he could spend much of his time in Kirriemuir in his mother’s company. This brought them closer together than ever, to the mutual spiritual enrichment of themselves and their readers.

The *Auld Licht Idylls*, which were written in the difficult and restless days of his apprenticeship, were dedicated to Frederick Greenwood. The critics praised it, but the book had many faults ; it

was haphazard, it was inconsistent, it was a patch-work. But the odd thing about it was that almost every derogatory adjective that the severest critics might apply to it could be countered with another in praise of it. It was commonplace, but at the same time unusual; clumsy as a weaver's cottage, but at the same time delicate as a fairy's palace; unsophisticated but mature. And the Barrie touch was unmistakable—tenderness, sympathy, the sense of loneliness, the impression that behind the surface humour of his characters there lurked the spectres of poverty, greyness of existence, and the tragedy of thwarted souls. Here too, in "The Auld Licht Kirk" we find the first hint of Barrie faëry :

"Forty years ago it was an accepted superstition in Thrums that the ghosts of children who had died before they were baptised went wailing and wringing their hands round the kirkyard at nights, and that they would continue to do this until the crack of doom."

And the wintry setting of the storm-stead school-house in Glen Quharity in the first chapter, which so oddly anticipates the opening of *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan*, written forty-three years later, could only have been done by Barrie, who invests his description with a touch of eeriness :

"Far up the glen, after it twists out of view, a manse and half a dozen thatched cottages that are there may still show a candle-light, and the crumbling gravestones keep cold vigil round the

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grey old kirk. Heavy shadows fade into the sky in the north. A flake trembles against the window; but it is too cold for much snow to-night. The shutter bars the outer world from the schoolhouse.”

There was no mistaking the Barrie humour either, and the truth of his sketches—that of Lizzie Harrison, the village post-mistress, for example, who steamed letters open so that she should have first-hand information about all the latest Kirriemuir gossip. Lizzie also kept a book-shop “in which the supply of books corresponded exactly to the lack of demand for them.” There is, too, the story of the fate which overtook the “paper-minister” who concealed a sermon within the leaves of the pulpit Bible. And there is the gently satirical humorous, “The Courting of T’nowhead’s Bell”:

“For two years it had been notorious in the square ‘that Sam’l Dickie was thinking of courting T’nowhead’s Bell, and that if little Sanders Elshioner (which is the Thrums pronunciation for Alexander Alexander) went in for her he might prove a formidable one.”

The two of them had been courting the lady, but, “due to an inability to take up the running at the place where they left off the Saturday before,” neither got very far. And as Bell had given not the slightest indication which of them she preferred, things were at a complete standstill. One Sunday, however, the entire T’nowhead family arrived at

the church without Bell. That seemed to start something in Sanders, who slipped out of the church with the intention of proposing to her, now that he had a clear field. But Sam'l followed him, and a stern race began, which was keenly followed by all who were fortunate enough to be sitting in the gallery of the kirk. Sam'l won, proposed before he had time to change his mind again, and was accepted. Sanders straightway began to drop hints into his rival's ear until all Sam'l's mind was clouded with doubt. The upshot was that he relinquished his prize in favour of Sanders, who married Bell.

"Years afterwards it was said in Thrums that Sam'l had treated Bell badly, but he was never sure of it himself.

"'It was a near thing—a mighty near thing,' he admitted to his cronies in the Square."

There is more than mere clever fooling here. Barrie knew his people well and dealt with them in a kindly manner—their self-consciousness, their "pawkiness," their tongue-tiedness, their habit of taking an interminable time to make up their minds. Admirable comedy, one of the best things Barrie has ever done.

The success of the "Idylls" assured, Barrie felt that he had come into his kingdom. In the exaltation of the moment he sent a copy of the book to Robert Louis in far-off Samoa, and anxiously awaited an acknowledgment of his gift. Unfortunately the book went astray. So did the copy of *When a Man's Single*, which he also sent. Stev-



OLD JAMIE RONALDSON
Sabbath at T'nowhead

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enson's first letter to Barrie was dated February, 1892. It was a long letter with perhaps just a suspicion of condescension :

“ You are one of four that have come to the front since I was watching and had a corner of my own to watch, and there is no reason, unless it be in these mysterious tides that ebb and flow, and make and mar and murder the works of poor scribblers, why you should not do work of the best order. . . .

“ We are both Scots . . . and I suspect both rather Scotty Scots ; my own Scotchness tends to intermittency, but is at times erisypelitous—if that be rightly spelt. Lastly, I have gathered we had both made our stages in the metropolis of the winds, our Virgil's ‘ grey metropolis,’ and I count that a lasting bond. No place so brands a man.”

Barrie had long been an ardent admirer of Stevenson, but not a blind, uncritical adorer. The essay on R. L. S. in *An Edinburgh Eleven* showed that clearly enough.

“ He experiments too long ; he is still a boy wondering what he is going to be. With Cowley's candour he tells us that he wants to write something by which he may be for ever known. His attempts in this direction have been in the nature of trying different ways, and he always starts off whistling. Having gone so far without losing himself he turns back to try another road. Does his

heart fail him, despite his jaunty bearing, or is it because there is no hurry? It is quite true the great work was begun. The sun sinks while the climber walks round his mountain, looking for the best way up."

Connection having been established between them, Stevenson, who had done most of his best work by this time, became aware of Barrie as a recognised writer.

"I have . . . reread the *Edinburgh Eleven*," he wrote, "and had a great mind to write a parody and give you all your sauce back again, and see how you would like it yourself."

Stevenson begs his new friend to write to him again in his "infinite distance" about his work. "No harm in telling *me*; I am too far off to be indiscreet; the riverside, and the stream is in Babylon: breathe your secrets to me fearlessly." Later:

"They tell me your health is not strong. Man, come out here and try the Prophet's chamber. . . . The house is three miles from town, in the midst of great silent forests. There is a burn close by, and when we are not talking you can hear the burn, and the birds, and the sea breaking on the coast three miles away and six hundred feet below us, and about three times a month a bell—I don't know where the bell is, nor who rings it; it may be the bell in Hans Andersen's story for all I know. . . . I want you to come

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here. . . . We would have some grand cracks. Come, it will broaden your mind, and be the making of me.”

Almost exactly a year later—the “sauce” of the “Edinburgh Eleven” apparently not quite forgotten, Stevenson again writes :

“ I make you my salute with the firm remark that it is time to be done with trifling and give us a great book, and my ladies fall into line with me to pay you a most respectful courtesy, and we all join in the cry, ‘ Come to Vailima ! ’ . . . Your soul’s health is in it—you will never do the great book . . . till you come to Vailima.”

In many ways the two men were very much alike ; both lived venturesome lives, vicariously, and it would have been a joyous meeting if the two of them had ever come together. But in 1894 Stevenson died.

“ I shall never go up the Road of Loving Hearts now,” Barrie wrote, deeply affected by the death of his friend, “ on ‘ a wonderful clear night of stars,’ to meet the man coming towards me on a horse. It is still a wonderful clear night of stars but the road is empty. So I never saw the dear king of us all. But before he had written books he was in my part of the country with a fishing wand in his hand, and I like to think that I was the boy who met him that day by Queen Margaret’s burn, where the rowans are, and busked a fly for him, and stood watching, while

his lithe figure rose and fell as he cast and hinted back from the crystal waters of Noranside.

“Stevenson wrote me many years afterwards from Samoa, and described how he had stayed at the Airlie Arms, and sat under a very terrifying minister! He had a curious experience when fishing in the Noran. As he sat on the bank he heard some of his trout still wobbling in the basket. A scunner came over him, and he vowed, and he kept his vow, never to angle for trout again.”

It pleased Barrie to toy with the fantasy that he had met Stevenson, and in one of his amusing speeches at a dinner of the Printers' Pension Corporation in 1924, he gave his “reminiscences of his supposed meeting” with him:

“The only time I ever met Stevenson was in Edinburgh, and I had no idea who he was. It was in the winter of '79. I well remember the wind was ‘blawin’ snell’ when I set off that afternoon with my note books to the Humanities Class of the University of Edinburgh. As I was crossing Prince’s Street—a blasty corner—I ran against another wayfarer. Looking up I saw that he was a young man of an exceeding tenuity of body, his eyes, his hair, already beginning to go black, and that he was wearing a velvet jacket. He passed on, but he had bumped against me, and I stood in the middle of the street, regardless of the traffic, and glared contemptuously after him.

‘He must have grown conscious of this,

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because he turned round and looked at me. I continued to glare. He went on a little bit, and turned round again. I was still glaring, and he came back and said to me, quite nicely, ‘After all, God made me.’ I said, ‘He is getting careless.’ He lifted his cane, and then instead, he said, ‘Do I know you?’ He said it with such extraordinary charm that I replied, wistfully, ‘No, but I wish you did.’ He said, ‘Let us pretend I do,’ and we went off to a tavern at the foot of Leith Street, where we drank what he said was the favourite wine of the Three Musketeers. Each of us wanted to pay, but it did not much matter, as neither of us had any money.

“We had to leave that tavern without the velvet coat and without my class books. When we got out it was snowing hard, and we quarrelled—something about Mary Queen of Scots. I remember how he chased me for hours that snowy night through the streets of Edinburgh, calling for my blood. That is my only reminiscence of R. L. S.”

Mary Queen of Scots was an old sentimental love of Barrie’s. She “seems to have been luring me to my undoing ever since I saw Holyrood,” he writes in *Margaret Ogilvy*. It was on October 11th, 1928, when he opened a bazaar at Jedburgh in aid of a fund for the preservation of the house in which Queen Mary lodged in 1566, on her way to visit Bothwell, who was lying sick at Hermitage Castle in Liddesdale, that Sir James made the most open

confession of his feelings toward the Queen of Scots. Unable to sleep, he had saddled his horse and galloped into Jedburgh one night, drawn thither irresistibly by an unmistakable call to Queen Mary's house. There was not a gleam in any of the windows, but he suddenly remembered how, at Loch Leven, there was at all hours someone waiting and ready to place a lamp in a darkened eye of the castle in response to a light across the loch, a signal that friends were near. He flashed his lantern, and in a moment a lamp shone in a turret window. Without a sound the key turned, the door opened softly, and he found himself inside the keep in the presence of the Queen. He went down on one knee, kissed her pretty hand, and called her "My liege." . . .

Not only did Barrie come under the Stevenson spell at the beginning of his literary career, but, if we are to conclude that *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan* is as late as the year of its publication—1931, the Stevensonian glamour lay over his work till the end. There was one person, however, who tried hard—or pretended to try hard—to resist the magic of Robert Louis. That was Margaret Ogilvy. It was hard work, but in the end he got her too.

"In the novels we have a way of writing of our heroine, 'she drew herself up haughtily,' and when mine drew themselves up haughtily I see my mother thinking of Robert Louis Stevenson. She sternly refused to read *The Master of Ballantrae*. 'I could never thole his books,'

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she protested, and the real reason for her antipathy to him was because Stevenson ‘wrote better books than mine.’ Barrie did everything to get her to read ‘The Master.’ ‘I would place it on her table so that it said good-morning to her when she rose. She would frown and, carrying it downstairs, as if she had it on the tongs, replace it on its bookshelf. . . . I would hide her spectacles in it and lay it on top of the clothes-basket and prop it invitingly open against her tea-pot.’ At last she fell, and, when she thought nobody was looking, she read it surreptitiously. They saw her through a key-hole and he bounced into the room. But she was too clever for him. She had only an apron upon her lap and was looking out of the window. Then,

“ ‘You have been sitting very quietly?’ ”

“ ‘I always sit quietly. I never do anything. I am just a finished stocking.’ ”

“ ‘Have you been reading?’ ”

“ ‘Do I ever read at this time of day?’ ”

“ ‘What is that in your lap?’ ”

“ ‘Just my apron.’ ”

“ ‘Is that a book beneath the apron?’ ”

“ ‘It might be a book.’ ”

“ ‘Let me see.’ ”

“ ‘Go away with you to your work.’ ”

“ ‘But I lifted the apron. ‘Why, it’s *The Master of Ballantrae*!’ I exclaimed, shocked.

“ ‘So it is!’ said my mother, equally surprised. But I looked sternly at her, and perhaps she blushed.

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“ ‘ Well what do you think : not nearly equal to mine ? ’ said I with humour.

“ ‘ Nothing like them,’ she said determinedly.

“ It was *Treasure Island* that finally conquered her.

“ I remember how she read *Treasure Island*, holding it close to the ribs of the fire (because she could not spare a moment to rise and light the gas), and how, when bedtime came, and we coaxed, remonstrated, scolded, she said quite fiercely, clinging to the book, ‘ I dinna lay my head on a pillow this night till I see how that laddie got out of the barrel.’ ”

The best thing Barrie said of Stevenson was : “ He was the spirit of boyhood, tugging at the skirts of this old world and compelling it to come back to play.” The poorest thing he ever wrote about him were the verses, “ Scotland’s Lament,” which appeared in *The Bookman* in January, 1895.

In July, 1889, Barrie made his first important contribution to the novel—*A Window in Thrums*. Like *Auld Licht Idylls* the book was a selection of papers that had already appeared in the *British Weekly* and *Scots Observer*, and the *St. James’s Gazette*, but on the whole it was more like a novel than anything Barrie had as yet given to the public. With overseas Scots the novel immediately became a favourite, but in Scotland it had a mixed reception. *The Scotsman* said that Barrie was “ a man who could make copy out of the bones of his grandmother.” Cunningham-Graham declared : “ If it pleases

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the Kail-yarders to represent half of the population of their native land as imbeciles the fault is theirs.” Much kinder, and much more in keeping with what the public itself felt, was what Mrs. Oliphant wrote in *Blackwood's*: “No book could be more deeply instinct with the poetry of real feeling.” “Q” declared that Barrie was the most romantic of all his literary loves, and Augustine Birrell wrote in the *Spectator*: “Everybody is reading *A Window in Thrums* and *Auld Licht Idylls*. The instantaneous popularity of these two books is a beautiful thing. The author has conceded nothing to the public taste. May he never do so!” Barrie himself tells us, in the Introduction to the *Peter Pan* edition of his works, in 1930:

“When the English publishers read *A Window in Thrums* in manuscript they thought it unbearably sad and asked me to alter the end. They warned me that the public does not like sad books. Well, the older I grow and the sadder things I see, the more do I wish my books to be bright and hopeful. . . . It is a sadder book to me than it can ever be to anyone else.”

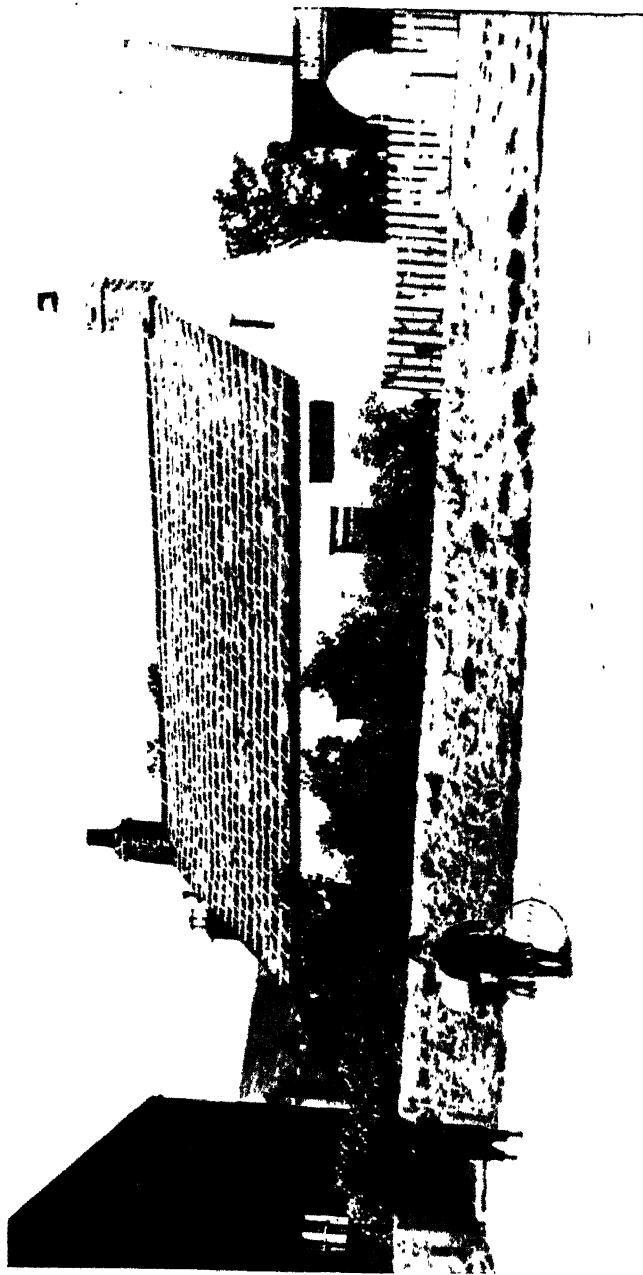
As to the setting of the book, let Barrie describe it himself:

“On the bump of green round which the brae twists, at the top of the brae, and within cry of T’nowhead Farm, still stands a one storey house, whose whitewashed walls, streaked with the discoloration that rain leaves, look yellow when

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the snow comes. In the old days the stiff ascent left Thrums behind, and where is now the making of a suburb was only a poor row of dwellings and a manse, with Hendry's cot to watch the brae. The house stood bare, without a shrub, in a garden whose paling did not go all the way round, the potato pit being only kept out of the road, that here sets off southward, by a broken dyke of stones and earth. On each side of the slate-coloured door was a window of knotted glass. Ropes were flung over the thatch to keep the roof on in wind."

To-day the "Cottage on the Brae" is somewhat changed. It has a slate roof now instead of a thatched one, and a tidy little garden has sprung up around it. The people who, Barrie says, lived there, really lived in the Tenements. It was through a window in the Tenements that the real Jess looked out on the world "as through a telescope," for twenty years or more. There is no square foot of glass in the "Cottage," at which Jess sat and commanded a view of the brae. There is a window in the east end of the cottage, but it was Leeby who used it to keep an eye on the doings at the Auld Licht Manse. Barrie tells us that there "was never any Jess." Possibly not in the flesh. But the Jess Barrie saw peeking through the window in the Tenements existed all the same. Anything that was "rare and beautiful in the make-belief Jess she had from my mother; the imaginary woman came to me as I looked into the eyes of the real one."



“ At the top of the brae and within cry of T’nowhead Farm still stands a one-storey house ”
“ The “ Window ” in fiction.

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Dearth. Of course they exist. Or do they? You remember what happened to Mary Rose; what happens to us in our waking dreams when Time is not?

“The call has come to MARY ROSE. It is at first as soft and furtive as whisperings from holes in the ground. . . . Then in a fury as of storm and whistling winds . . . it rushes upon the island, raking every bush for her. . . . Once MARY ROSE’S arms go out to her husband for help, but thereafter she is oblivious of his existence. Her face is rapt, but there is neither fear nor joy in it. Thus she passes from view . . .”

That is Barrie’s theme—there is neither death nor time. Separation and sorrow, pain and anguish—we cannot deny their existence. But the present is in such a hurry to become the past that time is almost immediately swallowed up in eternity. And before we have fully grasped this, we ourselves have slipped over the invisible border-line and become part of the Great Reality.

But how absurd to remind us of all this! Why not aim at the “glittering prizes” of life as did poor Lord Birkenhead, and having won them, find that we have grasped nothing after all. Why not carve out new kingdoms like Lawrence of Arabia? Well, kingdoms pass: but loving hearts and tenderness are of the eternal essence of things. They will survive as will the poems of Burns, as long as there are beings in this little world of ours who can love

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and remember, and as long as we hover between the mysterious lands of desolating tears and joyous laughter.

The “ Window ” is not a good story ; it is hardly a story at all—rather a group of sketches, one of which, “ A Home for Geniuses,” is a mere irrelevancy. The plot, such as it is, begins only with the incident of the glove. There seem to be weaknesses in the character of Jess. Cynical moderns may ask—and no doubt they are justified in doing so—why should a son, who is trying to make his way in London, be compelled to think all his life in terms of his mother ? Why must he defer to her opinion when he wants to take unto himself a wife ? Why must he be the staff on which she is to lean when she has a good husband to support her ? Why should she interfere in her son’s scheme of life ? Meddling old creature ! Was that chapter, “ A Tale of a Glove,” written with tragic foreboding ?

The moment comes to a mother when she realizes with a terrible sense of shock, with an awesome fear, knowing now what she did not know twenty years before, that her son, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, is about to make, not only a decision that may make or mar him, but a choice which, if rightly made, will really mean a fundamental spiritual separation between the two of them ; and the mother suddenly grows selfish. But why shouldn’t the boy, being merely a boy after all, carry, no doubt sentimentally, a girl’s glove about with him ? Hundreds of boys have

done so—have played the fool like Jamie. There is something pathetic about it all.

“ ‘ Wha is she, Jamie ? ’ my mother said.

“ He turned awa his heid—so she telt me. ‘ It’s a lassie in London,’ he said, ‘ I dinna ken her muckle.’

“ ‘ Ye maun ken her weel,’ my mother persisted, ‘ to be carryin’ aboot her glove ; I’m dootin’ ye’re gey fond o’ her, Jamie ? ’

“ ‘ Na,’ said Jamie, ‘ a’m no. There’s no nae-body I care for like yersel, mother.’ ”

Was Jess the only mother who ever felt like that ? If only a son would listen he could learn the beginning of wisdom.

Leeby, the sister, was the first to go, but she “ did not blame Jamie for not coming to her, for . . . even in the presence of death the poor must drag their chains.” Then Hendry went, and Jess was left alone.

Then the call came to Jess. Only the minister was with her when she died. “ On a summer day, when the sun was in the weavers’ workshops, and bairns hopped solemnly at the game of palaulays, or gaily shook their bottles of sugarellly water into a froth, Jamie came back.”

He had neglected his loved ones for the woman in London, and it was a lonely, tragic, shame-faced home-coming. He climbed to the top of the brae “ with the face o’ a man ’at had come straucht frae hell,” to the cottage now occupied by strangers.

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Finally he asked permission to go through it for the last time. The woman of the cottage described the scene afterwards.

“ I gaed oot meanin’ to leave ’im to ’imself, but my bairn wouldna come, an’ he said, ‘ Never mind her,’ so I left her wi’ ’im, an’ closed the door. He was in a lang time, but I never kent what he did, for the bairn juist aye greets when I speir at her.

“ I watched ’im frae the corner window gang doon the brae till he came to the corner. I thocht he turned round there an’ stood lookin’ at the hoose. He would see me better than I saw him for my lamp was i’ the window, whaur I’ve heard tell his mother keepit her cruizey. When my man came in I speired at ’im if he’d seen onybody standin’ at the corner o’ the brae, an’ he said he thocht he’d seen somebody wi’ a little staff in his hand. Davit gaed doon to see if he was aye there after supper-time but he was gone.”

Jamie was never again in Thrums.

The love that existed between mother and son ; the affection between the various members of a humble Scottish family ; the faithlessness towards them of the only son on whom such high hopes were built ; that is the stuff out of which Barrie has made his story. The “ Window ” is a sad—an almost unbearably sad story. But so is Barrie’s own.

And yet, the whole tale is not told in the Valley of the Shadow. Life is not entirely spent there, and there is in the book the grotesque which, mingled with the tragic, goes to make up the warp and woof of life. Tragedy, God knows, is our portion and, please God, this present transient experience is but that and a preparation for eternity. Were it not that God has given us that faculty of laughter, it would be impossible for us to carry on and play the tragic comedy to a close. And the little sketches of character in the "Window" are so true, the insight so penetrating; as when Hendry finds himself in the way of Jess and Leebie who are expecting company, and confides in the Dominie:

"She's aye ta'en like that when she's expectin' company. Aye, it's a peety she canna tak' things cannier."

And when we hear Tibbie Mealmaker's chap at the door, we are infinitely relieved to see that poor Hendry, about whom we had begun to worry again, has been pushed into the arm-chair with Barrow's *Sermons* in one hand, that he is resigned-looking and will not do the family any discredit, and to know that the tea-table is there, ready to be brought in at a moment's notice, as if Hendry's family had company—and such distinguished company—every afternoon.

The "Window," Barrie tells us, "wrote itself very quickly. I have read that I rewrote it eight times, but it was written once only, nearly every

chapter, I think, at a sitting.” Certainly Stevenson appreciated it. He wrote from Vailima, and in his words one hears not only the critical artist but the man of sad experience :

“I read for the first time . . . the ‘Window in Thrums’; it has . . . real flaws; but somehow it is—well . . . it’s by Barrie. And he’s the man for my money. The glove is a great page; it is startlingly original, and as true as death and judgment. Tibbie Birse in the Bur’al is great . . . but I think it was a journalist that got in the word ‘official.’ The same character plainly had a word to say to Thomas Haggard. Thomas affects me as a lie—I beg your pardon; doubtless he was somebody you knew, that leads people so far astray. The actual is not the true.

“I am proud to think you are a Scotchman—though to be sure I know nothing of that country, being only an English tourist, quo’ Gavin Ogilvy. I commend the hard case of Mr. Gavin Ogilvy to J. M. Barrie, whose work is to me a source of living pleasure and heartfelt national pride. There are two of us now that the Shirra might have patted on the head. And please do not think when I thus seem to bracket myself with you, that I am wholly blinded with vanity. Jess is beyond my frontier line; I could not touch her skirt; I have no such glamour of twilight on my pen. I am a capable artist; but it begins to look to me as if you were a man of genius. It’s a devilish hard thing for a man who writes so

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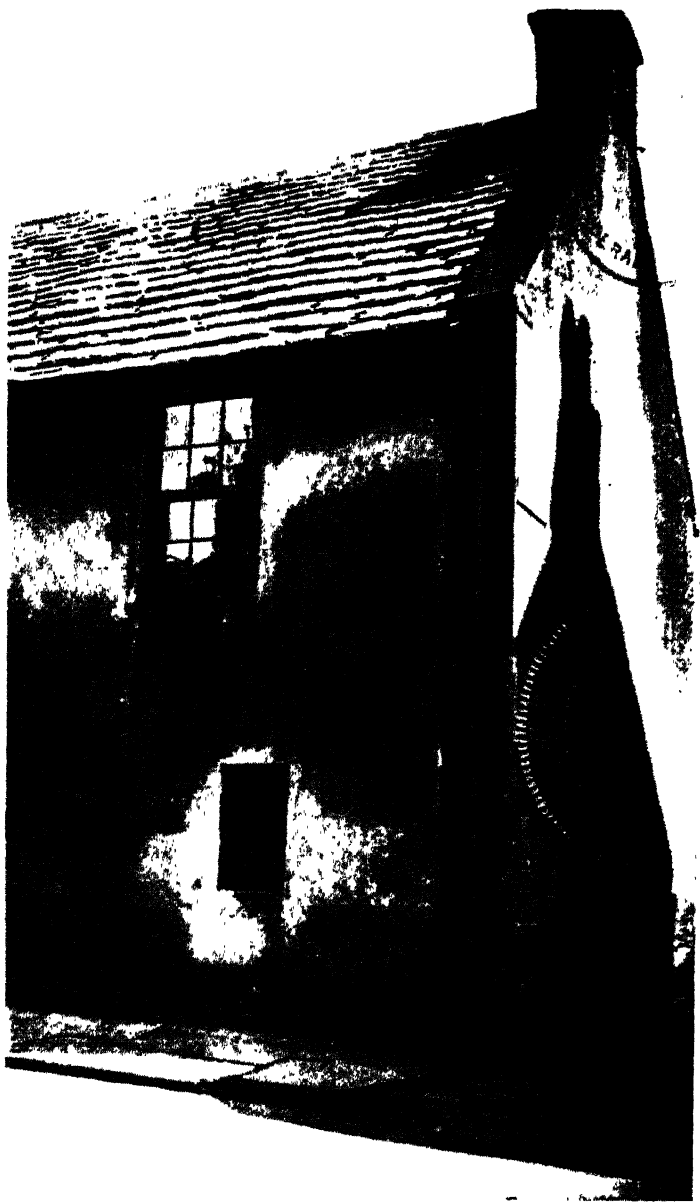
many novels as I do, that I should get so few to read. And I can read yours, and I love them."

This letter was written in December, 1892, and a year later Stevenson again comes back to Tibbie Birse.

"The particular flower of the flock to whom I have hopelessly lost my heart is Tibbie Birse. I must have known Tibbie Birse when she was a servant's mantua-maker in Edinburgh and answered to the name of Miss Broddie. She used to come and sew with my nurse, sitting with her legs crossed in a masculine manner; and swinging her foot emphatically, she used to pour forth a perfectly unbroken stream of gossip. . . . The recollection of that thin, perpetual, shrill sound of a voice has echoed in my ears sinsyne. I am bound to say she was younger than Tibbie, but there is no mistaking that and the indescribable and eminently Scottish expression."

There are three main influences at work on Barrie, Bunyan and Carlyle whom he came to know through his mother, and Margaret Ogilvy herself.

"When Christiana saw that her time was come, and that she was the first of the company that was to go over, she called for Mr. Great-heart her guide, and told him how matters were. So he told her he was heartily glad of the news. . . . Then she bid him that he should give advice how all things should be prepared for her journey. So he told her, saying, Thus and thus it must



"THIS IS JESS'S WINDOW."
The "Window" in fact.

“THE MAN FOR MY MONEY”

be, and we that survive will accompany you to the river side.

“Then she called her children, and gave them her blessing, and told them that she had read with comfort the mark that was set in their foreheads, and was glad to see them with her there, and that they had kept their garments so white. Lastly, she commanded her sons and daughters to be ready against the messenger who should come for them.”

And Carlyle ?

“Fortunatus had a wishing Hat, which when he put on, and wished himself Anywhere, behold he was There. By this means had Fortunatus triumphed over Space, he had annihilated Space ; for him there was no Where, but all was Here. Were a Hatter to establish himself, in the Wahn-gasse of Weissnichtwo, and make felts of this sort for all mankind, what a world we should have of it ! Still stranger, should, on the opposite side of the street, another Hatter establish himself ; and, as his fellow-craftsmen made Space-annihilating Hats, make Time-annihilating ! Of both would I purchase, were it with my last groschen ; but chiefly of this latter. To clap-on your felt, and, simply by wishing that you were *Anywhere*, simply to be *There* ! Next to clap-on your other felt, and, simply by wishing that you were *Anywhen*, straightway to be *Then* ! ”

And then that gentle-looking “middling old

lady" with the shawl about her shoulders and the snowy mutch on her head, whom he found it impossible to keep out of his books. "He tries to keep me out; but he canna. It's more than he can do."

"It is a queer thing," she would say softly, "that near everything you write is about this bit place. You little expected that when you began. I mind well the time when it never entered your head, any more than mine, that you could write a page about our squares and wynds. I wonder who it has come about?"

There was a time when I could not have answered that question, but that time has long passed. "I suppose, mother, it was because you were most at home in your own town, and there was never much pleasure to me in writing of people who could not have known you, nor of squares and wynds you never passed through, nor of a country-side where you never carried your father's dinner in a flagon. There is scarce a house in all my books where I have not seemed to see you a thousand times, bending over the fireplace or winding up the clock . . ."

"I trust my memory will ever go back to those happy days, not to rush through them, but dallying here and there, even as my mother wanders through my books . . ."

CHAPTER V

"A RICH BOOK"

THE next book to appear was *My Lady Nicotine*. It consisted of a series of sketches which originally appeared in the *St. James's Gazette*. Unlike the most of Barrie's work this little book is very definitely "dated." It is topical and would have been forgotten long ere now if anyone but Barrie had written it, and it might have been written by any of his contemporaries who were being talked about at the time, Israel Zangwill, George Grossmith, senior, or Jerome K. Jerome. The sketches of the somewhat innocuous group of people who figure in the book are good journalism, and Barrie makes fun of them all—himself included. There are suggestions of the Barrie who hides behind the journalist—M'Connachie, as he christens him later—for example, the invention of his fictitious brother, Henry. The house-boat *Arcadia* will in time become the setting of *Walker, London*, and the schoolboy, Primus, who "laid siege to the heart of William John" (the boy on the house-boat), "captured it in six hours and demoralized it in twenty-four," we shall meet again. William John and Primus

"had a scheme for seizing a lugger and becoming pirates, when Primus was to be captain, William John first-lieutenant, and old Poppy" (Primus's handy name for his preceptor) "a prisoner. To the crew was added a boy with a catapult, one Johnny Fox, who was another victim

of the tyrant Poppy, and they practised walking the plank at Scrymgeour's window. The plank was pushed nearly half way out at the window, and you walked up to it until it toppled and you were flung into the quadrangle. Such was the romance of William John that he walked the plank with his arms tied, shouting scornfully, by request, ' Captain Kydd, I defy you, ha ha, the buccaneer does not live who will blanch the cheeks of Dick, the Doughty Tar ! ' ”

But, apart from such little touches, the book is merely a collection of clever journalistic sketches which are not to be taken seriously.

My Lady Nicotine had, however, a vastly important bearing on the life of at least one unimportant person. The book is about smoking, and about the tobacco smoked by the people who appear in it, "the Arcadia Mixture." In those days Barrie used to buy his pipe tobacco from Mr. Carrera, who kept a tobacconist's shop in Wardour Street. Mr. Carrera sold the business to Mr. Yapp for £3,000. By that time *My Lady Nicotine* had been published, and Barrie was already a well-known author. His face was well known too. One afternoon Mr. Yapp entered his shop as a customer was leaving. He asked his assistant if he knew the name of the customer, whose face was tantalisingly familiar. The assistant knew the name ; it was Barrie, who invariably bought Craven Mixture. The next time that Mr. Barrie entered the shop, Mr. Yapp was in the studio of Mr. Arthur Friedenson, the artist ;

a message arrived that Barrie was in his shop, and that he was being detained in conversation, according to instructions.

The tobacconist hurried back to his shop. “ Am I correct in thinking that the Craven Mixture for which you come to my shop is the original of the Arcadian Mixture in your book ? ” he asked. Barrie said it was. “ Then,” said Mr. Yapp, “ would you bestow on me a great favour and make the same answer in writing ? ” Barrie agreed, and for years the Craven Mixture bore—and may still do—a replica of Barrie’s signature.

Barrie got nothing out of it, although the tobacconist offered to supply him with the tobacco free for the future. But in three years Mr. Yapp re-sold the business to Mr. Bernhard Baron for £100,000. One odd thing about *My Lady Nicotine* is that when Barrie was writing the book he hardly smoked at all. It was his friends who smoked the “ Arcadia Mixture.” So he once told Mr. Alfred Sutro. Barrie’s imagination “ supplied all the smoker’s sensations ; in his imagination he was a devotee, and no cigar looked too black for him.” So much for *My Lady Nicotine*.

Next came *The Little Minister*. This book, which was published in October, 1891, by Messrs. Cassell and Company, had originally appeared in serial form in *Good Words*, then under the editorship of the Rev. Ronald Macleod. *Good Words*, which was established in 1860, was edited by the Rev. Dr. Ronald Macleod, one of the most distinguished ecclesiastics of the Church of Scotland of his day.

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At first the magazine was the butt of the ridicule of men like James Hannay, who edited *The Edinburgh Courant* from 1860-64. Hannay christened the new journal the *Goody Two Shoes Magazine*; but, as in Oliver Goldsmith's ballad,

The man recovered from the bite.
The dog it was who died.

Good Words survived contemporary "slings and arrows," and within a very few months the now world-famous magazine confounded its critics.

Good Words had a very important bearing on Barrie's cultural and spiritual development. He must have carried that magazine back a hundred times to Margaret Ogilvy; he must have read its contents with sympathy and understanding. In fact, it may have been *Good Words* as much as any other influence that kindled the divine spark in Barrie. He must have been familiar with it in his school-days, while he was a young man at the University, and when he was a student at home on holidays. It is impossible to imagine any Scottish boy or any young Scottish student with any intellectual or spiritual ambitions in those days not familiar with the magazine. It penetrated to the very core of Scottish religious life. It became almost a symbol; it comforted and guided thousands of anxious seekers who were wandering helplessly in the barren lands.

While there is perhaps nothing in Dr. Ronald Macleod's writings that can be said to have been an immediate and direct influence on the young mind

of Barrie, it is indubitably clear that the older man left his imprint on the younger. Dr. Macleod's "Wee Davie," for instance, might have been born in the Tenements.

“ ‘ Wee Davie ’ was the only child of William Thorburn, blacksmith. The child had reached the age in which he could venture, with prudence and reflection, on a journey from one chair to another, his wits kept alive by maternal warnings of ‘ Tak’ care, Davie ; mind the fire, Davie.’ And when his journey was ended in safety, and he looked over his shoulder with a cry of joy to his mother, he was rewarded, in addition to the rewards of his own brave and adventurous spirit, by such a smile as equalled only his own, and by the well-merited approval of ‘ Weel done, Davie.’ ”

And this other passage, with its note of underlying tragedy, might have been written by either of these Scots :

“ It was a beautiful morning in spring, with blue sky, living air, springing grass, and singing birds ; but William Thorburn had not left the house that morning, and the door was shut.”

And does not this beautiful passage remind us of the meeting between the old servant of God and his young successor in *The Little Minister* ?

“ Several years after this, Dr. M’Gavin, then a very old man, as he sat at his study fire, was conversing with a young preacher who seemed to

think that nothing could be accomplished of much value for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, unless by some great 'effort,' or 'movement,' or 'large committee,' which would carry everything at once by a *coup de main*. The Doctor quietly remarked, 'My young friend, when you have lived as long in the ministry as I have done, you will learn how true it is, that "God fulfils Himself in many ways." He is in the still small voice, and often, too, when he is neither in the earthquake nor in the hurricane. One of the most valuable elders I ever had . . . told me on his dying bed, that, under God, he owed his chief good to the death of his first child. . . . On the last evening of his life, when enumerating the many things which had been blessed for his good, he said to me, "But under God, it was my wee Davie that did it." ' ' ' "

And then there was the quaint but tragic figure of the Dominie who seems to have haunted Barrie during his pilgrimage. Was he a real person, or was the idea of him suggested by Dr. Macleod's picture of such a man in his *Reminiscences of a Highland Parish*?

"In college he had taken the first rank in his classes: and no wonder, then, if he is a little mortified in seeing an old acquaintance who had been a notorious dunce obtain a good living through some of those subtle and influential agencies, and 'pow'r o' speech i' the poopit,' neither of which he could command, and who—oleaginous

on the tiends—slowly jogged along the smooth road of life on a punchy, sleek horse, troubled chiefly about the great number of his children and the small numbers of his ‘ chalders ’ ; it is no wonder, I say, that he is mortified at this, compelled, poor fellow, to whip his way, tawse in hand, through the mud of A B C and Syntax, Shorter Catechism, and long division, on a pittance of some sixty pounds a year. Nay, as it often happened the master had a sore at his heart which few knew about. For when he was a tutor long ago in the family of a small Laird, he fell in love with the Laird’s daughter Mary, whose mind he had first awakened into thought, and first led into the land of poetry. She was to have married him, but not until he got a Parish, for the Laird would not permit his fair star to move in any orbit beneath that of the Manse circle. And long and often had the parish been expected, but just when the presentation seemed to be within his nervous grasp, it had vanished through some unexpected mishap, and with its departure hope became more deferred, and the heart more sick, until Mary at last married, and changed all things to her old lover. She had not the pluck to stand by the master when the Laird of Blackmoss was pressing for her hand. And when the black curly hairs of the master turned to grey as the dream of his life vanished, and he awoke to the reality of a heart that could never love another, and to a school with its A B C and Syntax. But somehow the dream comes back in its tenderness as he

strokes the hair of some fair girl in the class and looks into her eyes ; or it comes back in its bitterness, and a fire begins to burn at his heart, which very possibly passes off like a shock of electricity along his right arm, and down the black tawse, finally discharging itself with a flash and a roar into some lazy mass of agricultural flesh who happens to have a vulgar look like the Laird of Blackmoss, and an unprepared lesson ! ”

The Little Minister is a complex pattern. The original setting was again Thrums, but Barrie, realising that the background of weaverdom was inadequate, so far as the English public was concerned, tore the original web to pieces by throwing into it the love story of *The Little Minister*. So the Little Minister's romance became the real theme of the story. Stevenson spoke out most frankly about its weaknesses ; *The Little Minister*, he conceded, in a letter to the author, was more of a tale than *A Window in Thrums*, but he went on to make searching criticism :

“ *The Little Minister* ought to have ended badly ; we all know it did ; and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end, though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord in art. If you are



WINDY GHOUL—WHERE BABBIE FIRST DANCED
IN GAVIN'S NIGHT

going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that your honour was committed—at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them.”

The Little Minister, which appeared in October, 1891, in three volumes, was said at the time to have doubled the sale of *Good Words*. The book enjoyed an extraordinary popularity, 64,000 copies of the work being circulated before November, 1898. It was not only a romantic story, but Babbie strikes a new note in Barrie, to be sounded more clearly in *Peter Pan* :

“ Shall we not laugh at the student who chafes when between him and his book comes the song of the thrushes, with whom, on the mad night when you danced in Gavin’s night, you had more in common than with Auld Licht Ministers? The gladness of living was in your step, your voice was melody, and he was wondering what love might be. You were the daughter of a summer night, born where all the birds are free, and the moon christened you with her soft light to dazzle the eyes for ever. Not our little minister alone was stricken by you into his second childhood. To look upon you was to rejoice that so fair a thing could be ; to think of you is still to be young.”

If we take her as a symbol she represents not only the spirit of youth but a new and tantalising distraction that had come into Barrie's life along with literary success—the allure of fashionable London society women who were so near to him and yet seemingly so far beyond his grasp.

Babbie somehow or other is kin to Kilmeny and Mary Rose and Margaret Dearth; and we would look for her in the company of Wordsworth's elusive "phantom of delight":

A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

But an admission has to be made:

"No one seeing Babbie going to church demurely on Gavin's arm could guess her history. Sometimes I wonder whether the desire to be a gipsy again ever comes over her for a mad hour, and whether, if so, Gavin takes such measures to cure her as he threatened in Caddam Wood. I suppose not."

The love story of Gavin and Babbie, while improbable, is not impossible. There were qualities about the Little Minister, sentimentality, a touch of pomposity, and something that the modern world would not hesitate to call "priggishness," which must at times have goaded his wife almost to desperation. And there she was, a brilliant woman of the world, accustomed to wear "on her finger a jewel that the little minister could not have bought

with five years of toil,” settled down in the sober white-washed Auld Licht Manse, never seeing any of her clever London friends, who could talk to her about books and politics and theatres, and retail the gossip of the town, and compelled to listen to local clatter and make friends with the butchers’ and bakers’ wives. And Gavin would have his own ideas of a woman’s place in the home and of her attitude towards a husband who was not only a Man of God but an Auld Licht Minister.

On the other hand, the contracting parties were unusual people ; so are many of Barrie’s characters. When *The Little Minister* appeared Robertson Nicoll wrote to a friend :

“ I agree with you that *The Little Minister* is wildly improbable, but is it not a rich book, with many pretty little things about it ? There is much heart in it too.”

The story is at times over-sentimentalized ; but there is no jarring note in the beautiful picture of Gavin’s mother, or in the tender chapter entitled, “ Tragedy of a Mud House,” which tells us how old Nanny was rescued from the poor-house. Gavin and the doctor went to take the poor old woman to that place, the name of which “ is not to be spoken in Thrums, though it is nothing to tell a man that you see death in his face.” This is what happened :

“ The door stood open, and Nanny was crouching against the opposite wall of the room, such a

poor, dull kitchen, that you would have thought the furniture had still to be brought into it. The blanket and the piece of old carpet that was Nanny's coverlet were already packed in her box. The plate rack was empty. Only the round table and the two chairs, and the stools and some pans were being left behind.

" 'Well, Nanny,' the doctor said, trying to bluster, 'I have come, and you see Mr. Dishart is with me.'

"Nanny rose bravely. She knew the doctor was good to her, and she wanted to thank him. . . .

" 'Thank you kindly, sirs,' she said; and then two pairs of eyes dropped before hers.

" 'Please to take a chair,' she added timidly. . . .

"Both men sat down, for they would have hurt Nanny by remaining standing. . . .

" ' . . . Nanny,' the doctor said, 'you must remember what I told you about the poo—, about the place you are going to. It is a fine house, and you will be very happy in it.'

" 'Ay, I'll be happy in't,' Nanny faltered, 'but, doctor, if I could just hae bidden on here though I was na happy!'

" 'Think of the food you will get; broth nearly every day.'

" 'It—it'll be terrible enjoyable,' Nanny said.

" 'And there will be pleasant company for you always,' continued the doctor, 'and a nice room to sit in. Why, after you have been there a week, you won't be the same woman.'

“‘That’s it!’ cried Nanny with sudden passion. ‘Na, na: I’ll be a woman on the poor’s rates. Oh, mither, mither, you little thocht when you bore me that I would come to this!’

“‘Nanny,’ the doctor said, rising again, ‘I am ashamed of you.’

“‘I humbly speir your forgiveness, sir,’ she said, ‘and you micht bide just a wee yet. . . . Oh, Mr. Dishart, it’s richt true what the doctor says about the—the place, but I canna just take it in. I’m—I’m gey auld.’ . . .

“The doctor glanced at the minister, and Gavin rose.

“‘Let us pray,’ he said, and the three went down on their knees. . . .

“I am not speaking harshly of this man, whom I have loved beyond all others, when I say that Nanny came between him and his prayer. Had he been of God’s own image, unstained, he would have forgotten all else in his Maker’s presence, but Nanny was speaking too, and her words choked his. At first she only whispered, but soon what was eating her heart burst out painfully, and she did not know that the minister had stopped. They were such moans as these that brought him back to earth:

“‘I’ll hae to gang. . . . I’m a base woman no’ to be mair thankfu’ to them that is so good to me. . . . If it could just be said to poor Sanders when he comes back that I died hurriedly, syne he would be able to haud up his head. . . . Oh,

mither! . . . I wish terrible they had come and ta'en me at nicht . . .'

" 'This is more than I can stand,' the doctor cried.

" Nanny rose frightened. . . . Gavin took her hand, and it was cold. She looked from one to the other, her mouth opening and shutting.

" 'I canna help it,' she said.

" 'It's cruel hard,' muttered the doctor. 'I knew this woman when she was a lassie.'

" The little minister stretched out his hands.

" 'Have pity on her, O God!' he prayed, with the presumptuousness of youth.

" 'Oh, God,' she cried, 'you micht!'

" God needs no minister to tell Him what to do, but it was His will that the poor-house should not have this woman. He made use of a strange instrument, no other than the Egyptian, who now opened the mud house door."

What Jeffrey, in his critical appreciation of *Tales of My Landlord*, wrote of Scott in 1816, might very truly be said of Barrie :

" The ingenious author has succeeded by far the best in the representation of rustic and homely characters ; and not in the ludicrous or contemptuous representation of them—but by making them at once more natural and more interesting than they had ever been made before in any work of fiction ; by showing them, not as

clowns to be laughed at—or wretches to be pitied and despised—but as human creatures—with as many pleasures and fewer cares than their superiors—with affections not only as strong, but often as delicate as those whose language is smoother—and with a vein of humour, a force of sagacity, and very frequently an elevation of fancy, as high and as natural as can be met with among more cultivated beings.”

Barrie has been accused of many literary sins—sins of commission and omission. But it must be remembered that he set out to win and please a public. The particular public who first showed real appreciation of his work was a public—call it sentimental and uncritical and intellectually *bourgeois*, if you like—that loved to find sympathy, kindness, and an understanding of their unspoken religious aspirations in the books of their favourite writers. For Barrie, the Auld Lights represented human nature, and he very wisely decided to write about the people who were most like himself inside. Critics have said he was a poor describer of scenery. It is true that he preferred to write about people. It was about people that Margaret Ogilvy told him, not about scenery :

“ My mother did not care for scenery, and that is why there is so little of it in my books. The reflections were accepted with a little nod of the head, the descriptions of scenery as ruts on the road that must be got over at a walking pace.”

Possibly too, many of the details of the scenery of his native place may have become blurred by his long stay in England. And, in any case, Barrie knew that people were more interested in descriptions of people than of scenery. But it is not true to say that he could not describe scenery. Take this passage from the opening page of *The Little Minister* :

“It was the time of year when the ground is carpeted beneath the firs with brown needles, when split nuts patter all day from the beech, and children lay yellow corn on the dominie’s desk to remind him that now they are needed in the fields. The day was so silent that carts could be heard rumbling a mile away.”

That is an almost perfect piece of description. It has atmosphere, feeling, and is exactly the right length. A little more would have been tedious, would have made his readers skip a page or two impatiently. Already Barrie understood how to set a stage. What he still had to learn was how to discipline himself so that he would sternly exclude from his work distracting irrelevancies or clogging incident. He was to learn that when he actually began writing for the stage; not before then.

Were one looking for “originals,” one would undoubtedly point to the description of the storm and the rescue of Gavin and Lord Rintoul as having been influenced by *The Antiquary*. But

“ A RICH BOOK ”

in the matter of description Barrie would no more dream of entering the lists with Sir Walter than Sir Walter would think of trespassing in Lob's Wood, or The Island that Likes to be Visited.

CHAPTER VI

"THE ROAD OF LOVING HEARTS"

NOVEL writing was not, however, Barrie's sole interest about this time, and between 1889 and 1891 appeared a vast amount of journalistic work of high quality in the *Edinburgh Evening Despatch*, the *National Observer*, and the *Contemporary Review*. He wrote on such subjects as "A Holiday in Bed," "A Powerful Drug," "Every Man His Own Doctor," "Four-in-Hand Novelists," "Rule for Carving," "On Running after a Hat," and "Thoughtful Boys Make Thoughtful Men." The *British Weekly* published "Life in a Country Manse," "My Favourite Authoress," "The Captain of the School," and "To the Influenza." These articles were collected and appeared in the United States under the title, *A Holiday in Bed and Other Sketches*. The publication, which was unauthorized, never appeared in England.

Numerous other articles appeared in *Good Words* or in the *British Weekly*—"An Auld Licht Manse," "Dite Deuchars," "Ndintpile Pont?" "Q.," "The Man from Nowhere," "A Woodland Path." Further articles which appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Despatch* between August, 1888, and April, 1892, were "My Husband's Book," "An Invalid in Lodgings," "Mending the Clock," "The Fox Terrier Frisky," "Reminiscences of an Umbrella," "Shutting a Map," "Our New Servant" (is this the new servant who afterwards appeared in *Margaret Ogilvy*?), "The Other Times," "The

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Result of a Tramp.” “How Gavin Birse put it to Mag Lownie,” which afterwards appeared in *A Window in Thrums*, was published in the *Scots Observer* on February 8th, 1889. An article on “Bazaars,” a subject touched on years later when Mary Queen of Scots told him at Jedburgh that she had never been to a bazaar and had no idea what they were about, appeared in a *Pot Pourri of Gifts Literary and Artistic* . . . in Aid of the Annuity Fund of Scottish Masonic Benevolence, Edinburgh, 1890.

Barrie was able to command big prices for short stories such as “Is it a Man?” which appeared in a collection from *Black and White*. Another story, “The Superfluous Man,” ran during 1889 in *The Young Man*. The latter novelette was never reprinted. One interesting point about “A Superfluous Man,” is that the opening scene is no longer “Wheens,” but Ballynewan. The humour is not subtle but characteristically Barrie. Dan Moore, the superfluous man who, like Rob Angus, leaves his native village to make his way to London, says to his father one evening: “You seem to have given up answering advertisements.” The father answers: “It is the only way I can earn anything.” When Dan asks him to explain, the old man tells him: “Well, last week my letters ran away with two shillings and sixpence; so this week, as I have written none, I may be said to have made two shillings and sixpence.”

In addition to this journalistic work Barrie also tried his hand at more serious criticism. He contributed articles on Meredith, Hardy, Kipling, Eden

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Philpotts, and Baring Gould to the *Contemporary Review*. None of these were reprinted, but they were well written and resulted in his coming to know Meredith and Hardy intimately. Of Meredith he wrote :

“Mr. Stevenson, with the audacity of a generous spirit, chafing at the comparative neglect which has been the lot of his master, calls ‘Rhoda Fleming’ the ‘strongest thing in English letters since Shakespeare died.’ I shall only say that Mr. Meredith is one of the outstanding men of letters since the Elizabethan age, and that, without dethroning Scott, he is among the great English writers of fiction. We have a novelist of genius with us still. The others had their failings as he has and, if the future will refuse to find room for so many works as he offers it, one may question whether it will accept theirs. To say that he is a wit is not to pronounce the last word. He is the greatest of the wits, because he is greater than his wit.”

Not easy to resist that ! and Meredith and the young man from Kirriemuir very soon became good friends. Barrie was a welcome visitor at Box Hill, and when Frederick Greenwood invited him to support Barrie’s candidature for the Garrick Club, he wrote :

“If there seems a doubt of Barrie’s election, I will journey. But oh ! my work has told of me, and a day lost is a dropping of blood. Would it

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be out of rule and blushless for me to write to the Committee? The election of Barrie honours the Club.”

When *The Little Minister* appeared Meredith wrote Barrie a letter which must have given him vast pleasure :

“Our thanks are warm for *The Little Minister*. And how I envy you!—not the deserved success of the book, but your pleasure in writing it. The conjuration of Babbie must have been an hour of enchantment. She carries us—criticism can’t grow at her heels. Thrums, too, is as hot alive as ever. I hope I may see you soon.

“I am comforted in seeing that work like yours is warmly greeted by press and public.”

In 1909, after Meredith’s death, Barrie paid a most beautiful tribute to the memory of his friend :

“‘All morning,’ he wrote,¹ ‘there had been a little gathering of people outside the house. It was the day on which Mr. Meredith was to be, as they say, buried. He had been, as they say, cremated. The funeral coach came, and a very small thing was placed on it and covered with flowers. One plant of the wallflower in the garden would have covered it. The coach, followed by a few others, took the road to Dorking, where, in a familiar phrase, the funeral was to be,

¹ The article, “Neither Dorking nor the Abbey,” appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* on May 26th, 1909. It was later published as a sixteen-page booklet by Constable.

and in a moment or two all seemed silent and deserted, the cottage, the garden, and Box Hill.' But it was by no means deserted. Soon 'They' had gathered around it in their turn, 'the mighty company, his children, Lucy and Clara and Rhoda and Diana and Rose and old Mel and Roy Richmond and Adrian and Sir Willoughby and a hundred others,' who waited for their king to come forth. He was seated in the arm-chair which to many had been 'the throne of letters in this country.' When the last sound of the coaches had rolled away he stirred in his chair. 'Something was happening to him: and it was this, old age was falling from him.' He flung open the door and stood looking down at his beloved subjects. 'They wore bright raiment; they were not sad like the mourners who had gone, but happy as the forget-me-nots and pansies at their feet and the lilac overhead, for they knew that this was his coronation day.' It was a glorious morning and he went swinging down the path, 'singing briskly and calling to his dogs' . . . and there came to him, somehow, a knowledge (it was the last he was ever to know of little things) that people had been at variance as to whether a casket of dust should be laid away in one hole or another, and he flung back his head with his old glorious action, and laughed a laugh, 'broad as a thousand beeves at pasture.' For he had seen the immortals awaiting him as they await every great man when he dies, 'at the top of the nearest hill.' 'Life about man is

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revealed as but the reflection of a greater life, and life itself as having but a half-blind existence unless the radiance of eternity, its spring sunlight, illumines the footsteps and the vision of those who live it.’ ”

Surely this is beautiful writing with something of the sublime in it. This faculty for pity, and sympathy for “ creatures who can love so much and yet are surrounded by the impregnable wall of death,” gives Barrie his unique place in English letters. Possibly he is “ to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness,” but he is as a refreshing oasis in the parched and burning desert of to-day.

One other glimpse Barrie has given us of Meredith, in a speech at the Annual Dinner of the Society of Authors, on November 28th, 1928, “ rushing around Hyde Park, three times on end, flying from his misery.” In the same speech he referred to Hardy, whom he had known ever since his article on “ Thomas Hardy and his Novels,” in the *Contemporary Review* of July, 1899 ; and then he went on to give the Authors some interesting details about the aged novelists. It appears that Hardy had never read *Wuthering Heights* because he “ had heard it was depressing.” It was refreshing to think of the great writer, almost silent, sitting in a London Club amid a crowd of men chattering about style. He used his receiving set for the education of his dog, creeping downstairs to turn it on. At a rehearsal of *Tess* the dog suddenly began to howl,

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and Hardy explained that the animal knew that the Children's Hour was about to begin and he was howling because he would miss it. Hardy's shyness was so great that he never allowed himself to be touched, and no one but a relative ever dared to put his hand on his shoulder. He must have been pushed into Heaven, and the first person he would ask for would be Shelley. A strange and yet not a surprising friendship between realist and idealist, and a friendship easily understandable when we learn from Barrie that Hardy was the sort of seer who "could scarcely look out of a window in the twilight without seeing something hidden from the mortal eye."

On September 2nd, 1931, when Barrie unveiled a bronze statue of Thomas Hardy, by Eric Kennington, at Dorchester, the "Casterbridge" of the Wessex novels, he told the following story :

"When the child Hardy was born the doctor thought him dead and dropped him in a basket. That was an anxious moment for this country. But a woman slipped forward to make sure and found he was alive. A statue to this woman—Kennington could have done worse than to give us that.

"What interests me still more is this : Was Hardy shamming in the basket ? . . . Knowing what we do of him now, we may think that at his first sight of life he liked it so little he lay very still. There was never any more faltering. An undaunted mind—that was Hardy. He was a great man. That was his hard fate."

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Another literary friendship, one of the most important in Barrie's life, was with W. E. Henley. In 1889 Henley had been appointed editor of *The Scots Observer*. In 1890 the name of the paper was changed to *The National Observer*, and its headquarters were transferred from Edinburgh to London. The paper numbered among its contributors “R. L. S.,” Hardy, Kipling, Andrew Lang, H. G. Wells, Barrie, and W. B. Yeats. The first issue had an article by Barrie on “The Lost Works of George Meredith,” over his own signature; another contained a sketch by Henley himself, of Barrie acting as chairman at a Greenock public dinner:

“I was introduced to him and we both held out our hands. Having shaken his, I let go. His remained in the air, as if the ceremony was new to him. Several others were introduced and he gave to all his hand to do what they liked with it. This being over, he placed it by his side. . . . He was evidently anxious to please. The way his arm shot out, like a pirate lugger from its hiding-place, was proof of this. The natural solemnity of his face is a little startling to one who has come out to dine, but there is no doubt he made several efforts to be jolly. When a joke was made you could see him struggling, not with his face alone, to laugh heartily. It was as if he tugged the strings that work the organ of risibility, but either the strings were broken or he had forgotten to bring the organs. . . . Once did he manage a genuine smile, but some of us forgot ourselves and cheered,

and it fled. So far as I could see, he got it beneath the table. He had dived after his programme, I think, and while below must have done something to his face akin to what the lady does when she darts away with a crooked bonnet and comes back with it straight. Mr. Barrie sat motionless hugging his smile. He was even afraid to let it know that he knew it was there. He might, so careful was he, have been balancing something on his head. But, as I say, it fled. It was probably some other body's smile that had mistaken its owner.

"When he entered the hall, they stood up and cheered. He cast a swift glance at the door and seemed to be meditating flight, but so many were following behind that the way was blocked. Then he affected deafness; at all events he looked before him so stolidly that our palms stole away from each other ashamed of themselves. On his table was a large epergne of flowers. I saw him move his chair stealthily, inch by inch, until he was fairly behind the epergne. On the left and right he shut himself in, as far as possible, with bottles and cruets. Then he settled down for a jolly evening. . . . Obviously he was very anxious to be sociable for when those near him spoke to him, he listened with an attention that must have been painful to them, if, as is probable, they were only speaking of the weather. Sometimes it seemed to be a good story, for they laughed, and he flung himself back in his chair and waggled his head, and slapped his knee, and went through

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all the mechanical business that accompanies a laugh. He might have been called at such a time the photograph of a laugh—a laugh with no inside to it.”

But there was a stronger tie than journalism between the two men. In 1873, Henley, then in his twenty-fourth year, had gone to Edinburgh to see what Professor Joseph (afterwards Lord) Lister, “who was then outraging the settled canons of medicine by his new-fangled antiseptic treatment,” could do for a tubercular ankle. Henley lay in hospital for twenty months of terrible suspense when he feared that he would in all probability lose one, if not both, of his feet.

“From time to time he was carried in a basket to the operating theatre,” his biographer, Kennedy Williams, tells us, “through corridors that suggested to the nostrils the trail of a ghostly druggist ; and afterwards, back in his bed, he underwent disbandagings and dressings that were little reigns of terror in his microcosm. About him were patients who lay as though they were trying to get into training for the shroud and the grave. Nights were often carnivals of pain, when the mattresses seemed to run into boulders and hummocks, and to burn like a kiln ; a man in a neighbouring bed, his throat in the clutch of chloral, gurgled and hoiked ; somewhere, within earshot, a cistern drip-drop-drop-dripped, and to his overwrought nerves became maddening.”

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It was during this time of physical and mental agony, as Barrie later explained to the students of St. Andrews University, that Henley wrote "Invictus." "Still facing the hazard of losing both his feet . . . this man was singing that he was master of his fate and captain of his soul ! "

Another of Henley's poems—and his own favourite—was "The King in Babylon," which begins : "Or ever the knightly years were gone." The Admirable Crichton remembered the words and quoted them on his island kingdom.

"CRICHTON (*again in the grip of an idea*). A king ! Polly, some people hold that the soul but leaves one human tenement for another, and so lives on through all the ages. I have occasionally thought of late, that, in some past existence, I may have been a king. It has all come to me so naturally, not as if I had to work it out, but-as-if-I-remembered.

Or ever the knightly years were gone,
With the old world to the grave,
I was a *king* in Babylon,
And you were a Christian slave.

It may have been ; you hear me, it may have been."

Another link between the two men, and that the most beautiful and tender, was their love for Henley's little daughter, Margaret. She was a charming, sensitive child, a "wonder child, with an open, beautiful face, clear shining eyes and a wealth of golden hair." She had heard her father speak



THE AULD LIGHT MANSE "WITH ITS GARDEN WITHIN HIGH WALLS, AND THE
ROOF FACING SOUTHWARDS."

of Barrie as his friend, and tried to call him “Friendly,” but “Wendy” was the nearest she could get to it. And so the name “Wendy” was added to literature.

But it is not only in *Peter Pan* that Margaret Henley appears. We meet her in *Sentimental Tommy*, and her father too. One day poor, ragged little Tommy met a young girl in the street—a well-dressed young miss whom he promptly christened “Reddy” on account of her red-gold curls. One day Reddy invited Tommy to go home with her. She :

“ . . . first took him into a room prettier than the one he had lived in long ago . . . and then . . . into another room . . . whose walls were lined with books. Never having seen rows of books before except on sale in the streets, Tommy at once looked about him for the barrow. The table was strewn with sheets of paper that they roll a quarter of butter in, and it was an amazing thick table, a solid square of wood, save for a narrow lane down the centre for the man to put his legs in—if he had legs, which unfortunately there was reason to doubt. He was a formidable man, whose beard licked the table while he wrote, and he wore something like a brown blanket, with a rope tied round it in the middle. Even more uncanny than himself were three busts on a shelf, which Tommy took to be deaders, and he feared the blanket might blow open and show that the man also ended at the waist. But he did not, for

presently he turned round to see who had come in, and then Tommy was relieved to notice two big feet far away at the end of him."

Tommy was solemnly introduced to Reddy's father, and "raised his arm instinctively to protect his face, this being the kind of man who could hit hard." But instead of giving him a cuff, the man in the dressing-gown gave him a shilling.

Little Margaret Henley wound herself very firmly around Barrie's heart and he wrote two very beautiful things about her. One was: "There was an exuberance of vitality about her as if she lived too quickly in her gladness, which you may remember in some child who visited the earth for but a little while." The other beautiful thing was: "She looked like a baby-rose full blown in a night because her time was short."

Her passing was a terrible blow to the crippled father in Croydon:

Tommy "only meant to walk up and down her street so that she might see him from the window . . . but though he went several times into the street, Reddy never came to the window.

"The reason he had to wait in vain at Reddy's door was that she was dead. . . . Reddy had been lent to two people for a very little while, . . . and when the time was up she blew a kiss to them and ran gleefully back to God. . . . The gates of heaven are so easily found when we are little, and they are always standing open to let children wander in.

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“ But though Reddy was gone away forever, mamma still lived in that house, and on a day she opened the door to come out, Tommy was standing there ; she saw him there waiting for Reddy. Dry-eyed this sorrowful woman had heard the sentence pronounced, dry-eyed she had followed the little coffin to its grave ; tears had not come even when, waking from illusive dreams, she put out her hand in bed to a child who was not there ; but when she saw Tommy waiting at the door for Reddy, who had been dead for a month, her bosom moved and she could cry again.

“ Those tears were sweet to her husband, and it was he who took Tommy on his knee in the room where the books were, and told him that there was no Reddy now.”

CHAPTER VII

“THAT ODDITY, A SCOT BEATEN BY THE
ENGLISH”

PRESENTLY we shall have to consider Barrie in a new light. Between the publication of *My Lady Nicotine* and *The Little Minister*, a four-act play, *Richard Savage*, written in collaboration with H. B. Marriott Watson, was produced at a *matinée* at the Criterion Theatre, April 16th, 1891. A rhymed Prologue by W. E. Henley appeared on the programme, but not in the book, which was privately printed. The plot of *Richard Savage*, was based on Johnson's "Life" of the actor and vagabond. Richard Steele and Jacob Tonson were two of the characters who appeared in the play which, while liked by the audience, was damned by the critics, and was taken off immediately. Another dramatic production belonging to the same year was *Becky Sharp*, a weak paraphrase of Thackeray's novel, which was staged at Terry's theatre. On the last day of May, *Ibsen's Ghost*, "the wittiest burlesque I ever saw," as Mr. Walbrook, the veteran play-goer, called it, was staged at Toole's theatre. This old theatre, which was there as early as 1855, was originally the Polygraphic Hall. In 1869 it became the Charing Cross, or Folly Theatre, and was then mainly used for entertainment by single performers like Albert Smith and Emma Stanley. The theatre came under the direction of Toole in 1879 but was not christened "Toole's" till 1882. During his lesseeship an odd mixture of plays were presented

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—Henry J. Byron's *The Villainous Squire and the Village Rose*, described on the bill as a “ Bucolic Pastoral,” Robert Macaire, *Uncle Dick's Darling*, Burnard's *Artful Cards*, Daly's American company in *Casting the Boomerang*, *Auntie*, *The Upper Crust*, *Girls and Boys*, a forgotten three-act comedy by Pinero. An odd company for James Barrie to appear in. Toole's theatre closed for good in 1895.

Ibsen's Ghost was produced when Barrie was only thirty years of age, and that it had its place in the scheme of things, and achieved what it intended to achieve, we know from Barrie's own words. In the Introduction to *Peter Pan* he writes :

“ Not less vivid is my first little piece, produced by Mr. Toole. It was called *Ibsen's Ghost*, and was a parody of the mightiest craftsman that ever wrote for our kind friends in front. To save the management the cost of typing I wrote out the ‘ parts,’ after being told what Parts were, and I can still recall my first words, spoken so plaintively by a now famous actress : ‘ To run away from my second husband just as I ran away from my first, it feels quite like old times.’ On the first night a man in the pit found *Ibsen's Ghost* so diverting that he had to be removed in hysterics. After that no one seems to have thought of it at all.”

On February 25th, 1892, *Walker, London*, was produced at Toole's theatre. The original title of this three-act farcical comedy was *The Houseboat*. The play proved very successful, but Barrie himself

thought very little of it. The humour of the play is dated, like the humour of *Better Dead* and *My Lady Nicotine*. The plot is an absurd one. A London hair-dresser, Jasper Phipps, runs away on his wedding morning with the honeymoon money. He explains in a letter to his bride that he had all along intended to take the honeymoon by himself.

“Then, my girl, when the week’s leave is up, I will come back and marry you. Fear not, I am staunch. And don’t follow me. Your affectionate Jasper. P.S. I love you! I love you! I love you!”

Jasper sees a pretty girl fall into the river. She is rescued by a boatman, and Jasper bribes the boatman to say that he, Jasper, has rescued her. Invited aboard the house-boat, “*The Wild Duck*,” he poses as a renowned African explorer. Once or twice he nearly gives himself away :

“JASPER. I shot an elephant once. Oh yes, I did. I met the elephant in a forest and I had an air-gun with me, and I shot it. You can’t shoot without a gun in Africa. You would be surprised if you had seen the birds, the way they came down and picked the elephant. Hundreds of them.

“MRS. GOLIGHTLY. What kind of birds ?

“JASPER. Oh, there were eagles and snipe, vultures, sparrows, canaries, turkeys, and bull-rushes, the oof bird—they ate that elephant up and left nothing but the trunk.

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“ NANNY. And what did you do with the trunk ?

“ JASPER. O, I had it packed up. No, no, I had the trunk made into a portmanteau.”

However, the receipt of an imaginary telegram gets him out of the scrape, and Jasper goes off to find his bride, leaving the address, “ Walker, London.” Amusing fooling, which entertained the Town for three hundred nights.

Jane Annie, or the Good Conduct Prize was Barrie’s next effort in the drama. This “ new and original English comic opera,” with music by Ernest Ford, was written in collaboration with Conan Doyle. It was produced by Mr. D’Oyly Carte at the Savoy Theatre but was a complete failure. The Barrie touch is evident in such absurd passages as the following. The young bride, on being asked what she and her husband are to live on, replies :

“ Oh, we have worked that out very carefully. First of all he (her husband) is to sell out. Then he has a friend who wrote a novel in 14 weeks and got £1,000 for it. Well, Jack has much more ability than his friend, so he is to adopt novel writing as a profession, and as £1,000 in 14 weeks comes to £8,666 13s. 4d. a year, we shall be quite comfortable.”

The *Professor’s Love Story* followed *Jane Annie*. This play is a three-act sentimental character comedy in a setting somewhere in the neighbourhood

of Kirriemuir, in the autumn time, when the "shooters" come north from London and take possession. In fact, with the exception of the first act of *What Every Woman Knows*, the *Professor's Love Story* is the most Scottish of all Barrie's plays. The Professor is an absurd caricature of the supposed professorial type, and the play itself is the sort of play that an intelligent person who can follow Mr. Shaw goes to see under protest. But before very long Barrie "gets" him, just as he got the public, and before he knows it, the intelligent man is furtively wiping away a tear or choking back a lump in his throat, and wandering away down the by-lanes of his past and living over again some half-forgotten or well-loved romantic memory. It is a play on a par with *Buntz Pulls the Strings*, and no one ever claimed that "Buntz" was literature. But it put money in the author's purse, and the public were so fond of it that they flocked to see it at the Comedy Theatre from June 25th, 1894, until the end of 1895. The only critic who took the trouble to say anything unkind about *The Professor's Love Story* was, as might have been expected, William Archer. He called it "a calculated disloyalty to art, a patch-work of extravagant farce, mawkish sentiment, irrelevant anecdote."

In 1894 two important things happened to Barrie. He fell ill of pneumonia, and he got married. His illness was almost a national concern—a clear indication of the tremendous hold that the little man from the north with the "high pale brow, the dark hair and eye, the chiselled refinement of the

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profile,” had already obtained over the public. The lady whom he married was Mary Ansell, a young actress supplied to him for a particular play on specifications of his own, calling for a girl with beauty and charm and “able to flirt.” The marriage was dissolved in 1909.

The events of 1894 are amusingly summarised by “R. L. S.” on July 29th, in a letter which was begun on the 13th of that month and finished on August 12th :

“ No, Barrie, ’tis in vain they try to alarm me with their bulletins. No doubt you’re ill, and unco ill I believe ; but I have been so often in the same case that I know pleurisy and pneumonia are in vain against Scotsmen who can write. . . . You cannot imagine probably how near me this common calamity brings you. . . . How often and how long have I been on the rack at night and learned to appreciate that noble passage in the Psalms when somebody or other is said to be more set on something than they ‘ who dig for hid treasures—yea, than those who long for the morning ’—for all the world as you have been racked and you have longed. Keep your heart up, and you’ll do. Tell that to your mother, if you are still in any danger or suffering. And by the way, if you are at all like me—and I tell myself you are very like me—be sure there is only one thing good for you, and that is the sea in hot climates. . . . I take this as the hand of the Lord preparing your way to Vailima—in the

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desert, certainly—in the desert of Cough and by the ghoulish-wood-land of Fever—but whither that way points there can be no question—and there will be a meeting of the twa Hoasting Scots Makers in spite of fate, fortune, and the Devil. *Absit omen.*”

Then came the news of Barrie’s engagement and his marriage shortly after his recovery, and on August 12th, “R. L. S.” wrote :

“And here, Mr. Barrie, is news with a vengeance. Mother Hubbard’s dog is well again—what did I tell you? Pleurisy, pneumonia, and all that kind of truck is quite unavailing against a Scotchman who can write—and not only that, but it appears the perfidious dog is married. This incident, so far as I remember, is omitted from the original epic :

She went to the graveyard
To see him get buried,
And when she came back
The Deil had got merried.”

During the first half of the nineties a change was taking place in Barrie. He had begun his literary career as a Scot of the Scots ; now he was becoming more English in his outlook. So marked was the change that he was presently mourned as “that oddity, a Scot beaten by the English, who have destroyed his chance to be the great comic dramatist of his country.” Many Scotsmen have never felt quite the same towards Barrie since he put *The Little Minister* on the stage ; the glare of the foot-

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lights destroyed the delicate beauty of the Thrums setting and made the story seem merely stagey and sentimental.

What turned Barrie's thoughts to the stage ?

“ I think I would never have taken to it seriously,” he told his Dumfries audience in 1914, “ but for the pressure from two great Englishmen, Sir Henry Irving and Mr. George Meredith. Irving . . . drove me to write my first three plays and found managers to produce them. . . . Why Mr. Meredith wanted me so ardently to turn playwright I could never quite understand, unless it was because he liked me to go down to his famous chalet and tell him about theatres without his having to go to them.”¹

In an Introduction to the biography of Charles Frohman Barrie tells us : “ Frohman wanted me to be a playwright and I wanted to be a novelist. All those years I fought him on that. He always won.” In his Introduction to *Conrad in Search of his Youth* he says that the mission of his friend, Merrick, was “ to warn against the glamour of the stage.” The stage had always attracted Barrie ; he loved to hang about the theatre for the pleasure of gazing at the actors, “ not when dressed for their parts but as they emerge by the stage door. The stage doorkeeper is still to me the most romantic figure in any theatre, and I hope he is the best paid.” Was it increasing expenses that kept him in the theatre and the dis-

¹ After the phenomenal success of *The Little Minister* on the stage, Meredith invited Barrie to dramatize *Evan Harrington*, an invitation which, however, he declined.

covery that he could make money there easily and quickly? Or was it because he realised that his great weakness as a novelist was his habit of introducing irrelevancies into his narrative, whereas as a dramatist he had learned how to construct a plot? Perhaps the secret is to be found in this passage in the Introduction to *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* :

“ In a play we must tell little that is not revealed by the spoken words ; you must ferret out all you want to know from them, although of course now and then we may whisper a conjecture in brackets ; there is no weather even in plays except in melodrama ; the novelist can have sixteen chapters about the hero’s grandparents, but there can be very little rummaging in the past for us ; we are expected merely to present our characters as they toe the mark ; then the handkerchief falls, and off they go.”

For most authors the transition from novelist to dramatist can be neither easy nor satisfactory, but Barrie knew where his strength lay, and when he had completed his apprenticeship with *The Professor’s Love Story* and *The Little Minister*, he began to experiment with a new form of drama which very quickly raised him to a place among the great craftsmen of the theatre. When he began to write for the stage he was thinking mainly in terms of his actors and his audience. His plays had to have a box office appeal ; not for a moment did it enter his head that they might be regarded as literature.

Then the public began to ask for them in a more

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permanent form ; so did the publishers. But at first Barrie turned a deaf ear. His plays would look mere skeletons in print alongside those of Shaw and Galsworthy. He knew precisely how he wanted them to be interpreted. While they were in rehearsal he was a kind but exacting critic ; yet he spared himself as little as he spared the actors. They all worked their hardest to please him and to bring out *nuances* of character which only he seemed able to indicate. How was it possible to obtain such results by the printed page ? Presently, however, Barrie solved his problem.

What he did was to develop almost a new art. It was an elaboration of the process familiar to him in his reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He broke down the rigid form of the well-made play and altered its conventional appearance. Stage directions came to read like passages from novels ; the dialogue was supplemented by characteristic comments, by subtle suggestion of motive, and by close observation of detail. Take, for instance, these passages from *What Every Woman Knows* :

“ The damrod players pay no attention to David, nor does he regard them. Dumping down on the sofa he removes his 'lastic sides, as his Sabbath boots are called, by pushing one foot against the other, gets into a pair of hand-sewn slippers, deposits the boots as according to rule in the ottoman, and crosses to the fire. There must be something on David's mind to-night, for he pays no attention to the game, neither

gives advice (than which nothing is more maddening) nor exchanges a wink with Alick over the parlous condition of James's crown. You can hear the wag-at-the-wall clock in the lobby ticking. Then David lets himself go ; it runs out of him like a hymn :

“ DAVID. Oh, let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet,
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet.

(This is not a soliloquy, but is offered as a definite statement. The players emerge from their game with difficulty.)

“ ALICK (*with JAMES's crown in his hand*). What's that you're saying, David ?

“ DAVID (*like a public speaker explaining the situation in a few well-chosen words*). The thing I'm speaking about is Love.

“ JAMES (*keeping control of himself*). Do you stand there and say you're in love, David Wylie ?

“ DAVID. Me ; what would I do with the thing ?

“ JAMES (*who is by no means without pluck*). I see no necessity for calling it a thing.

(They are two bachelors who all their lives have been afraid of nothing but Woman. DAVID in his sportive days—which continue—has done roguish things with his arm when conducting a lady home under an umbrella from a soirée, and had both chuckled and been scared on thinking of it afterwards. JAMES, a commoner fellow altogether, has

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discussed the sex over a glass, but is too canny to be in the company of less than two young women at a time.) ”

Or :

“ The other chairs are horse-hair, than which nothing is more comfortable if there be a good slit down the seat. The seats are heavily dented, because all the Wylie family sit down with a dump. The draught-board is on the edge of a large centre table, which also displays four books placed at equal distances from each other, one of them a Bible, and another the family album. If these were the only books they would not justify Maggie in calling this chamber the library, her dogged name for it ; while David and James call it the west-room and Alick calls it ‘ the room,’ which is to him the natural name for any apartment without a bed in it. There is a book-case of pitch pine, which contains six hundred books, with glass doors to prevent your getting at them.”

But this is, of course, Barrie’s technique developed years after the original production of the play. We see its beginnings in *Sentimental Tommy*.

“ It is sable night when Stroke and Sir Joseph reach a point in the Den whence the glimmering lights of the town are distinctly visible. Neither speaks. Presently the distant eight-o’clock bell rings, and then Sir Joseph looks anxiously at his warts, for this is the signal to begin, and as usual he has forgotten the words.

“ ‘Go on,’ says someone in a whisper. It cannot be Stroke for his head is brooding on his breast. This mysterious voice haunted all the doings in the Den, and had better be confined in brackets.

“ (‘Go on.’)

“ ‘Methinks,’ says Sir Joseph, ‘methinks the borers——’

“ (‘Burghers.’)

“ ‘Methinks the burghers now cease from their labours.’

“ ‘Aye,’ replied Stroke, ‘’tis so, would that they ceased from them for ever!’

“ ‘Methinks the time is at hand.’

“ ‘Ha!’ exclaims Stroke, looking at his lieutenant curiously, ‘what makest thou say so? For three weeks these fortifications have defied my cannon, there is scarce a breach yet in the walls of yonder town.’

“ ‘Methinks thou wilt find a way.’

“ ‘It may be so, my good Sir Joseph, it may be so, and yet, even when I am most hopeful of success, my schemes go a-glaze.’

“ ‘Methinks thy dark . . .’

“ (‘Dinna say Methinks so often.’)

“ ‘Tommy, I maun. If I dinna get that to start me off, I go through other.’

“ (‘Go on.’)

“ ‘Methinks thy dark spirit lies on thee to-night.’

“ ‘Ay, ’tis too true. But canst thou blame me if I grow sad? The town still in the enemy’s hands, and so much brave blood already spilt in

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vain. Knowest thou that the brave Kinnordy fell last night ? My noble Kinnordy ! ’

“ Here Stroke covers his face with his hands, weeping silently and there is an awkward pause.”

Amateurs are—or were—constantly attempting to play Barrie—unsuccessfully. Gerald du Maurier explains the reason for their failure and incidentally the secret of his own success :

“ If one sees Shakespeare badly acted, it is not Shakespeare that suffers, it is the audience. But with a slightly written play that has situations requiring delicate handling, the author is at the mercy of his depictees and must stand or fall by its producer. Not so J. M. Barrie ; his plays are like the royal and ancient game of golf—either you can play or you simply cannot. . . . To work for him, and play for him, and produce for him is always a pleasure, the sort of pleasure one gets from guessing an acrostic, or trying to think of someone else’s name, and at last remembering it, before falling off to sleep. . . . It is never wise to flout Barrie’s suggestions at rehearsal,—and when he removes his pipe from his mouth and expresses an opinion that the heroine ought to wear a moustache in the love scene, it is best for the producer to leave the stage for a minute or two, smoke a cigarette and trust to Providence. As likely as not there will be a leading article in *The Times*, saying that the most poignant moment in the new Barrie play was when Jean decided to shave.”

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One must understand Barrie first before attempting to play his plays. Du Maurier spoke the Barrie language. That is why he could interpret him so successfully.

In 1896 Barrie made a trip to the United States with his wife and Robertson Nicoll. He went there mainly in the interest of the copyright of his novels, and arranged with his American publishers, Messrs. Scribners, to issue an authorized edition of all the novels, tales, and sketches that he wished to preserve. In the Preface to this American edition he wrote :

“ I know not how many volumes purporting to be by me are in circulation in America which are no books of mine. I have seen several of them, bearing such titles as *Two of Them*, *An Auld Licht Manse*, and *A Tillyloss Scandal*. They consist of scraps collected and published without my knowledge, and I entirely disown them. I have written no books save those that appear in this edition.”

Not that this disclaimer had much effect. One story called *Two of Them* appeared under the title, *A Lady's Shoe*, in an anthology, while three different publishers issued versions of *A Tillyloss Scandal*.

It was during this visit to the United States that he met Charles Frohman, and their friendship was ended only by Frohman's tragic death in the *Lusitania*, in 1915. “ This humorous, gentle, roughly educated, very fine American gentleman

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. . . this Niagara of a man . . . who never broke his word ” shared with Barrie a love for everything connected with the theatre. Barrie entrusted Frohman with the production of all his plays in England and America. Frohman worked hard on Barrie’s behalf, and such was his faith in his friend, J. A. Hammerton tells us, that if Barrie had asked him to dramatize the Telephone Directory, he would have smiled and answered with enthusiasm : “ Fine ! Who shall we have in the cast ? ”

As a result of the American visit, Frohman produced in New York, in September, 1897, the first dramatized version of *The Little Minister*. Maude Adams, whom he also met at this time and who was the original Peter Pan in the United States, took the leading rôle of Babbie.

During their stay in the United States, Barrie and Nicoll experienced “ one prolonged and unbroken welcome.” Barrie hated the publicity of it all and refused whenever possible to be interviewed. But as a prominent playwright he had to meet many theatrical people. At a dinner given to the two prominent Scottish visitors by the Aldine Club, New York, more than 120 representative American publishers and men of letters were present, including W. D. Howells, Henry van Dyke, G. W. Cable, and Thomas Nelson Page. The table was decorated with thistles, furze, and heather ; the menu included “ Haggis à la Thrums,” and a piper marched up and down playing during the feast. “ The man who created Thrums,” made a short speech, which concluded :

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“What impresses me especially about this gathering is to see so many publishers and authors gathered here, all quite friendly. Times have changed since a certain author was executed for murdering his publisher. They say that when the author was on the scaffold he said good-bye to the minister and to the reporters, and then he saw some publishers sitting in the front row, and to them he did not say good-bye. He said instead: ‘I’ll see you later.’ I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for this kindness, and I assure you that I shall never forget it as long as I live.”

“Barrie made the best and kindest of travelling companions,” Nicoll told Marcus Dods on his return to England, “but I was very sorry to find him so very frail. We saw American literary society thoroughly well and received great kindness. Of Church life we saw very little.” Possibly “Ian Maclaren,” who was lecturing in the United States at the same time, saw more of it.

That Barrie appreciated Nicoll as a travelling companion is clear from the following extract from a letter to his old friend, when a proposal was made in 1900 that they should go away on another journey together :

“It would be a splendid time undoubtedly, but outside the holiday of it I question whether I could turn it to much profitable account. What I feel is that it would probably do you a vast deal of good, and that it would be a great

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inducement to me to go, while this also is certain, that I would rather go a long journey with you than with any other man in the world.”

After Nicoll died in 1923, Barrie recalled these days together :

“ . . . Our attire was the one part of us to which he had a blind eye, unless, indeed, a book protruded from a pocket, balanced by a book in the other pocket. That, I am sure, was, in his opinion, the way in which all young men should set off, whistling, to seek their fortune ; it was his own way at all times of his life, except that no pockets could have contained all the books that he needed for the shortest journey. He carried them ‘ in his oxters ’ on all occasions, so that often as he walked his arms were extended as if he were about to attempt to fly, and the only valet he needed was one who could follow him and pick up the books as they fell ; in protracted travelling he gradually left his clothing behind him in the various hotels, as more and more books crowded them out of his valises. Many will tell of his enormous home library, out of which it seemed to be his ambition to crowd even himself. He never believed there was a sufficiency of books in that vast apartment ; he was, perhaps, the only man in the world who thought that more people should write books ; he considered that the next best thing to a good book was a bad book. He was so fond of books that I am sure he never saw a lonely one without wanting to

pat it and give it sixpence. I should say that he read thousands of them every year of his life, and as quickly as you or I may gather blackberries. He had not the slightest interest in science but would have been interested in it at last if it could have shown him how to treat his eyes so that he could read two books at once; he grudged two eyes to one book.

"And yet he read a great many more newspapers than books. When he was in America, if it was the books that became his sole luggage, it was the newspapers that necessitated his departure to the next city; for those papers are great in bulk, and in twenty-four hours they changed the appearance of his room as snow may change a landscape; no furniture now visible, only a mighty white expanse, out of which you had to dig him."

But there was another matter about which Nicoll wrote to Marcus Dods in September, 1896, just before sailing for America. It was about Barrie's book on his mother (who had died on September 3rd, 1895).

"To my mind the best of the books this year is Barrie's on his mother. It is extremely quiet and may be missed for the moment, but I have never seen anything of the kind so good. *Sentimental Tommy* is full of work and talent and genius, but it does not seem to me to move with steady accelerating force to its end, which is the great thing. But the two books together should put him miles ahead of all the other younger authors". . .

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In the limited edition of his novels published by Messrs. Scribners in 1896, Barrie had explained : “ They were written to please one woman who is now dead, but as I am writing a little book about my mother I shall say no more of her here.” *Margaret Ogilvy* appeared in December, 1896. Barrie had written no novels since 1891 ; for over five years he had been devoting himself to the theatre. But now his thoughts went back to Thrums and for a time he kept company with his memories. When the book was first published, many of his most appreciative readers felt that the reticence characteristic of a Scottish family, of which Barrie speaks in the book, had been violated. But after this lapse of years we cannot regret the intimacy of the details. Barrie has raised a monument more lasting than brass, not only to his own mother but to all the lovable, self-effacing, self-sacrificing mothers of Scotland of Margaret Ogilvy’s generation, who have passed along their way into the light of the morning. In the hands of a writer whose feeling for his mother was less sincere, the book might have fallen into sentimentalism, but its very simplicity is its guard and it remains a beautiful book.

Humour and pathos are mingled with unerring skill in this story of a Scottish mother who walked humbly before God, and whose simple faith gave her untroubled assurance for the morrow. If Barrie had given us nothing else he would have deserved well of his generation.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE MOST DELIGHTFUL LITTLE MONSTER CALLED TOMMY"

MARGARET OGILVY was, however, not the only Barrie book that was given to the world in 1896. The memory of his mother, and the necessary sojourning with her in spirit which the writing of his Memoir implied, drew his thoughts still further from the London stage and put him back in the tiny and far-away scene of Kirriemuir, where he had dreamed his first dreams and played his first plays and longed for the greater world beyond his immediate ken. So far he had seen Thrums through his mother's eyes. Now she was no more, and it gradually dawned on him that there was another Thrums—the Thrums of his boyhood, which he knew at first-hand and which she did not. So he reversed the earlier process and, instead of seeing the little town through his mother's eyes and "getting at" the weavers through her brain, he began to interpret Thrums for himself. This is a very different Thrums from that of Margaret Ogilvy's younger days. There are fewer weavers about; Barrie has made the discovery that he can play still another *rôle* with the skill of a master, one which he had never seriously attempted, the part of a boy. Boys are admirable actors; they like to pretend they are someone else. They lose much of their skill when they begin to be self-conscious young men. It is not everybody who can pretend he is a boy and make people forget he is a grown-up. Barrie is one of the few who can do it.

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As biography, *Sentimental Tommy* is not true to material fact ; spiritually it is absolutely true to life. It is not only the story of Barrie's boyhood, but the story of the boyhood of every Sentimental Tommy that ever lived in Thrums or anywhere else. Tommy is perhaps the most real of all Barrie's characters ; some of the scenes in the book are amongst the most poignant that he ever wrote. Take, for instance, the time when Tommy and his sister Elspeth visited their mother as guisers, as she lay dying in the London slum far away from Thrums :

“ The artfulness of Tommy lured his unsuspecting mother into telling how they would be holding Hogmanay in Thrums . . . how cart-loads of kebbock cheeses had been rolling into the town all the livelong day, and in dark closes the children were already gathering, with smeared faces and in eccentric dress, to sally forth as guisers at the clap of eight, when the ringing of a bell lets Hogmanay loose. Inside the houses men and women were preparing for a series of visits, at every one of which they would be offered a dram and kebbock and bannock, and in the grander houses ‘ bridies,’ which are a sublime kind of pie.

“ Tommy had the audacity to ask what bridies were like. And he could not dress up and be a guiser, could he, mother, for the guisers sang a song, and he did not know the words ? What a pity they could not get bridies to buy in London and learn the song and sing it. But of course

they could not ! (' Elspeth, if you tumble off the fender again, she'll guess.') . . .

" But as the great moment drew near there were no more questions ; two children were staring at the clock and listening intently for the peal of a bell nearly five hundred miles away. . . .

" A few minutes afterwards Mrs. Sandys was roused by a knock at the door, followed by the entrance of two mysterious figures. The female wore a boy's jacket turned outside in, the male a woman's bonnet and a shawl, and to make his disguise the more impenetrable he carried a poker in his right hand. They stopped in the middle of the floor and began to recite, rather tremulously :

Get up, good wife, and binna sweir,
And deal your bread to them that's here,
For the time will come when you'll be dead,
And then you'll need neither ale nor bread.

" Mrs. Sandys had started, and then turned piteously from them ; but when they were done she tried to smile, and said, with forced gaiety, that she saw they were guisers, and it was a fine night, and would they take a chair. The male stranger did so at once, but the female said, rather anxiously : ' You are sure as you don't know who we is ? ' Their hostess shook her head, and then he of the poker offered her three guesses, a daring thing to do, but all went well, for her first guess was Shovel and his old girl ; second guess, Before and After ; third guess, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Auld Licht Minister. At

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each guess the smaller of the intruders clapped her hands gleefully, but when, with the third, she was unmuzzled, she butted with her head at Mrs. Sandys and hugged her, screaming, ‘ It ain’t none on them ; it’s jest me, mother, it’s Elspeth ! ’ and even while their astounded hostess was asking could it be true, the male conspirator dropped his poker noisily and stood revealed as Thomas Sandys.”

It is because Tommy is so much more flesh and blood than many of Barrie’s other characters that he is so real to us ; that is why Tommy’s Thrums is so real to us. It too is true to life—the Hanky School, the Muckley, the things that went on at the Cuttle Well, in the Den. When Black Cathro, from whose school “ a band of three or four or even six marched every autumn to the universities as determined after bursaries as ever were Highlandmen to lift cattle,” “ dropped some disparaging remarks about the Stuarts to his history class,” Tommy sent him a challenge—a little cotton glove which he placed on the Dominie’s desk. Cathro lifted it and by that action accepted Tommy’s challenge. At the closing time he said to the boy :

“ ‘ I’m no a rich man, laddie, but I would give a pound note to know what you’ll be ten years from now.’ ”

“ There could be no mistaking the dire meaning of these words, and Tommy hurried, pale but determined, to the quarry, where Corp, with a barrow in his hands, was learning strange

phrases by heart, and finding it a help to call his warts after the new swears.

“ ‘ Corp,’ said Tommy, firmly, ‘ I’ve set sail ! ’

“ On the following Saturday evening Charles Edward landed in the Den. In his bonnet was the white cockade, and round his waist a tartan sash ; though he had long passed man’s allotted span his face was still full of fire, his figure lithe and even boyish. For state reasons he had assumed the name of Captain Stroke. As he leapt ashore from the bark, the Dancing Shovel, he was received right loyally by Corp and other faithful adherents, of whom only two, and these of a sex to which his House was ever partial, were visible, owing to the gathering gloom. Corp of that ilk sank on his knees at the water’s edge, and kissing his royal master’s hand said, fervently : ‘ Welcome, my prince, once more to bonny Scotland ! ’ Then he rose and whispered, but with scarcely less emotion, ‘ There’s an egg to your tea.’ ”

Robert Louis Stevenson had an odd connection with *Sentimental Tommy*, or rather a supposed connection with it. Barrie had written his friend that he would have him in mind when writing the story, and Stevenson, whose curiosity was aroused, had written and asked him what he meant.

“ I am a little in the dark about this new work of yours,” he wrote, with a touch of humorous indignation ; “ what is to become of me after-

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wards ? You say carefully—methought anxiously—that I was no longer me when I grew up. I cannot bear this suspense : what is it ? It’s no forgery. And AM I HANGIT ? These are the elements of a very pretty lawsuit which you had better come to Samoa to compromise.”

Barrie had been thinking of Stevenson’s passion for the *mot propre*, and he made Tommy miss a bursary because it took him forty minutes during the examination to find the right word. Tommy

“ had brought himself to public scorn for lack of a word. . . . He had wanted a Scotch word that would signify how many people were in church, and it was on the tip of his tongue but would come no further. Puckle was nearly the word, but it did not mean so many people as he meant. . . . ‘ You little tattie doolie,’ Cathro roared, ‘ were there not a dozen words to wile from if you had an ill-will to puckle ? What ailed you at manzy, or——’

“ ‘ I thought of manzy,’ replied Tommy, woe-fully . . . ‘ but a manzy’s a swarm. It would mean that the folk in the kirk were buzzing thegither like bees, instead of sitting still.’

“ ‘ Even if it does mean that,’ said Mr. Duthie, with impatience, ‘ what was the need of being so particular ? Surely the art of essay-writing consists in using the first word that comes and hurrying on.’

“ ‘ I see,’ interposed Mr. Gloag, ‘ that McLauchlan (Tommy’s rival) speaks of there

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being a mask of people in the church. Mask is a fine Scotch word.' . . .

" 'I thought of mask,' whispered Tommy, 'but that would mean the kirk was crammed, and I just meant it to be middling full.'

" 'Flow would have done,' suggested Mr. Lorrimer.

" 'Flow's but a handful,' said Tommy.

" 'Curran, then, you jackanapes !'

" 'Curran's no enough. . . . I wanted something between curran and mask,' said Tommy, dogged, yet almost at the crying. . . .

" 'You said you wanted a word that meant middling full. Well, why did you not say middling full—or fell mask ?' asked Mr. Ogilvy. . . .

" 'I wanted one word,' replied Tommy. . . .

" Cathro took Tommy by the neck and ran him out of the parish school of Thrums. When he returned to the others he found the ministers congratulating McLauchlan. . . . And then an odd thing happened. As they were preparing to leave the school, the door opened a little and there appeared in the aperture the face of Tommy, tear-stained but excited. 'I ken the word now,' he cried, 'it came to me a' at once ; it is hantle !' "

Four years after *Sentimental Tommy* appeared the sequel, *Tommy and Grizel*. When Tommy failed to win the bursary that would have taken him to college, Mr. Dishart advised the schoolmaster to tell Aaron Latta, who had wanted to marry Tommy's

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mother, that the sooner he sent Tommy to the herding the better.

“ ‘ Well,’ said Cathro, savagely, ‘ I have one satisfaction, I ran him out of my school.’ ”

“ ‘ Who knows,’ replied Mr. Ogilvy, ‘ but what you may be proud to dust a chair for him when he comes back ? ’ ”

Instead of becoming a herd Tommy managed to get to London, where he won fame and fortune in literature. He returned to Thrums to woo Grizel, his boyhood’s sweetheart ; but, alas ! he was no longer the simple young Tommy of old. Success had somehow or other brought out the weak points in his character. Grizel saw through him and Tommy returned to the south. When Grizel later learned that he was ill in Switzerland, she went to him, only to find him philandering with a married woman. This was too much for Grizel to bear ; she had a nervous breakdown and returned to Thrums. Tommy, full of remorse, followed her, and nursed her back to health. Then, learning that the woman he had met in Switzerland was in the neighbourhood, Tommy went to see her. While climbing over a gate after an assignation, he slipped, and,

“ as he was descending, one of the iron spikes on the top of (the wall) pierced his coat, which was buttoned to the throat, and he hung there by the neck. He struggled as he choked, but he could not help himself. He was unable to cry

out. The collar of the old doctor's coat held him fast.

"They say that in such a moment a man reviews all his past life. I don't know whether Tommy did that ; but his last reflection before he passed into unconsciousness was ' Serves me right ! ' Perhaps it was only a little bit of sentiment for the end."

One of the charms of *Sentimental Tommy* is the Thrums setting, old to Barrie but new to the world, just as the Thrums of Margaret Ogilvy had been to readers of the " Window." *Tommy and Grizel* loses interest because its setting is no longer Barrie's Thrums, or Margaret Ogilvy's ; it is the Thrums of the unsympathetic English visitor. Barrie did not realise that himself, but thought it was Tommy that gave the interest ; so he kept on writing about him. It was only when he saw that the charming irresponsibility of the boy is no longer charming in the grown-up that he had to kill Tommy off.

" Poor Tommy ! he was still a boy, he was ever a boy, trying sometimes, as now, to be a man, and always when he looked round he ran back to his boyhood as if he saw it holding out its hands to him and inviting him to come back and play. He was so fond of being a boy that he could not grow up. In a younger world, where there were only boys and girls, he might have been a gallant figure."

And then, when he thought the matter out later, he realized that the boy that will not grow up must



MARGARET OGILVY AND JANE ANN
A hitherto unpublished photograph taken by Barrie himself.

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remain outside the actual world with its problems and responsibilities, if he is to retain his elflike charm. And so we get Peter Pan, who is unable to come inside the window. Perhaps Barrie actually stumbled on this truth already in *Tommy and Grizel*, without quite realizing it. There is a reference in the book to a new work by "T. Sandys." It was

"a reverie about a little boy who was lost. His parents find him in a wood singing joyfully to himself because he thinks he can now be a boy for ever ; and he fears that if they catch him they will compel him to grow into a man, so he runs further from them into the wood, and is running still, singing to himself because he is always to be a boy."

Tommy and Grizel is an admission that the grown-up man who wants to be irresponsible as a child, who shirks the varied responsibilities of mature life, can bring only sorrow and tragedy on himself and those who love him. Such concealed bitterness of spirit we do not find again in Barrie ; but we cannot fail to notice that when in any of his plays he brings in a lady of fashion, satire is never absent, however subtle. This is most marked in contrast to his kindly and tender treatment of humbler women. Perhaps the first time that we hear this note of satire is in *Sentimental Tommy*, at the Supper of the "S. R. J. C." "The letters, Shovel explained, meant Society for the something of Juvenile Criminals, and the toffs what ran it got hold of you when you came out of quod."

“ ‘ Charming ! ’ chirped the lady, . . . pausing to drop an observation about Tommy to a clergyman : ‘ So glad I came ; I have discovered the most delightful little monster called Tommy.’ The clergyman looked after her half in sadness, half sarcastically ; he was thinking that he had discovered a monster also.”

CHAPTER IX

"PETER IS EVER SO OLD, BUT HE IS REALLY ALWAYS THE SAME AGE"

IN 1902 *The Little White Bird* was published. This is one of the most important of Barrie's works; it not only marked the end of his career as the novelist the world had known, but opened the *Peter Pan* cycle. The play, *Peter Pan*, was produced in 1904; the story, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, was published in 1906, and *Peter and Wendy* in 1911. *The Little White Bird* is the beginning of a new craftsmanship which finds its supreme expression in *Peter Pan*, *Dear Brutus*, and *Mary Rose*. It is a book that could have been written only by an author of intense spiritual sensitiveness, who has pondered long and deeply over the problems of life; it is a book that can only be enjoyed by those who are willing to come to it with simplicity and faith and who find that they still "wear a child's outlook on life."

The story is told by the middle-aged Captain W——, who is Barrie himself. The Captain pretends to be grumpy and disagreeable, but he really is one of the kindest of men. There are both humans and not-humans in the story. Captain W—— is a sort of fairy godfather to a little nursery governess and the young artist whom she marries. In time he wins the love of their little son, David, with whom he plays in the Park. In return for his kindness David leads him into the fairy kingdom. He would never have known this kingdom if it had not been for David.

“David knows that all children in our part of London were once birds in the Kensington Gardens ; and that the reason there are bars on nursery windows and a tall fender by the fire is because very little people sometimes forget that they have no longer wings, and try to fly away through the window or up the chimney.”

It was through David that Captain W—— came to know the fairies and learn where they came from.

“When the first baby laughed for the first time, his laugh broke into a million pieces, and they all went skipping about. That was the beginning of fairies. . . . It is frightfully difficult to know much about the fairies, and almost the only thing known for certain is that there are fairies wherever there are children.”

The Captain got Irene, the daughter of William the Waiter, to be David's nurse. Irene, too, had her burgess ticket of Fairyland. She knew only one fairy tale, “but she told it as never has any fairy-tale been told in my hearing.”

“‘Tell me—tell me quick,’ cried David, though he knew the tale by heart.

“‘She sits down like,’ said Irene, trembling in second-sight, ‘and she tries on the glass slipper, and it fits her to a T, and then the prince, he cries in a ringing voice, “This here is my true love, Cinderella, what now I makes my lawful wedded wife.”’ ”

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“ Then she would come out of her dream, and look round at the grandees of the Gardens with an extraordinary elation. ‘ Her, as was only a kitchen drudge,’ she would say in a strange soft voice and with shining eyes, ‘ but was true and faithful in word and deed, such was her reward.’ ”

And then there was the Little House in the Kensington Gardens, “ which is the only house in the whole world that the fairies have built for humans,” and the amazing adventure that befell Brownie, the poor little street singer at the fairies’ ball. The fairy court was not in its usual good temper at the moment, “ the cause being the tantalizing heart of the Duke of Christmas Daisies.” The Duke was “ an oriental fairy, very poorly of a dreadful complaint, namely inability to love, and though he had tried many ladies in many lands he could not fall in love with one of them.” Immediately after any lady had been presented to his grace, the court doctor examined his heart, and then always shook his bald head and murmured, “ Cold, quite cold ! ” Brownie went to the ball to see if the Duke would have her.

“ No one seemed to have the least hope ‘ that he would have her ’ except Brownie herself, who, however, was absolutely confident. She was led before his grace, and the doctor putting a finger carelessly on the ducal heart, which for convenience’ sake was reached by a little trap-door in his diamond shirt, had begun to say mechanically, ‘ Cold, qui——,’ when he stopped abruptly.

“ ‘What’s this?’ he cried, and first he shook the heart like a watch, and then put his ear to it.

“ ‘Bless my soul!’ cried the doctor, and by this time, of course, the excitement among the spectators was tremendous, fairies fainting right and left.

“Everybody stared breathlessly at the Duke, who was very much startled and looked as if he would like to run away. ‘Good gracious me!’ the doctor was heard muttering, and now the heart was evidently on fire, for he had to jerk his fingers away from it and put them in his mouth. The suspense was awful!

“Then in a loud voice, and bowing low, ‘My Lord Duke,’ said the physician elatedly, ‘I have the honour to inform your excellency that your grace is in love.’”

In Chapter XIV we meet Peter Pan himself.

“Peter is ever so old, but he is really always the same age, so that does not matter in the least. His age is one week, and though he was born so long ago he has never had a birthday, nor is there the slightest chance of his ever having one. The reason is that he escaped from being a human when he was seven days old; he escaped by the window and flew back to the Kensington Gardens.”

And what of Porthos? In *The Little White Bird* Porthos is a St. Bernard, and a very lovable St. Bernard he is. In *Peter Pan* he becomes a Newfoundland dog and changes his sex. At first,

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Porthos is the Captain's companion ; then he turns into William Paterson. Here again Barrie tells a story which is not merely a fantastic fairy tale ; if you look deeper you will find he is expressing a profound truth. It is this ; if you want a companion who will be constantly grateful, then he must be a dog. Porthos proves this by the experiment of trying to be a man. If you want to have a human being for a companion he must become an individual. Once he is beyond the child stage he must have a way of his own along which you cannot follow him, and he will not come at your bidding.

Barrie was now recognized as the most popular “drawing” dramatist of the day. Whatever he cared to write for the stage was assured of success. He promised to write a new play for Frohman, who waited patiently for it. At last he heard from Barrie. Would Frohman dine with him at the Garrick Club ? There was something about the new play which he wished to discuss. Frohman found his friend diffident in approaching the subject. Yes, he had finished the play as he had promised but—he was afraid it would not be a commercial success. He called it a “dream child” which he was anxious to see on the stage. But he had another play which was sure to be a commercial success. If Frohman would produce the “uncommercial” play, which would be financially unsuccessful, he could at the same time produce the other, which would be sure to compensate him for the loss. If it did not, Barrie would make up the losses himself. One of the plays, which he had called *Peter Pan*, was about a Boy

who wouldn't grow up ; the other was topical, a sort of mild satire on the popular problem play. Its title was *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*, and it had been written for Ellen Terry, who was to play the title rôle.

Frohman undertook to produce both plays. *Peter Pan* appeared on December 7th, 1904, at the Duke of York's Theatre. Appearing at a time when the theatre was a dull and unattractive place for children, it was a wonderful success from the first. After running in London for the Christmas season, it was produced in New York, where it ran for eight months. The next Christmas the play was revived in London ; since then it has never missed a winter in London and has become as much a British institution as the Pantomime, or the Lord Mayor's Show itself. Perhaps Mr. Alfred Noyes got nearest the secret of its lasting appeal when he called the play "an exquisite illustration of a very ancient and beautiful phrase about the width and height and wonder of the kingdom of little children." Barrie put it in a slightly different way in the beginning of *Peter Pan* : "All the characters, whether grown-ups or babes, must wear a child's outlook as their only important adornment." That is absolutely essential. If you believe in fairies, in the incredibly real intangible things in life, and in a Never-Never Land where things that seem most inconsequent fall into their places like the pieces of coloured glass in the old-fashioned kaleidoscope, then *Peter Pan* will appeal to you. If you are what is called a realist, the play will not. Reality ? What do you mean by reality ?

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Barrie told the Critics' Circle at a dinner in May, 1922, what he understood by it. People had called him by various adjectives.

“Your word for me would probably be ‘fantastic.’ I was quite prepared to hear it from your chairman, because I felt he could not be so shabby as to say ‘whimsical,’ and that he might say ‘elusive.’ If you knew how dejected those terms have often made me. . . . Few have tried to be more simple and direct. I have also always thought that I was rather realistic. It is a terrible thing if one is to have no sense at all about his work.”

For Barrie the real things in life are the eternal verities, not the discussion of topical issues, or the handling of some social problem that has ceased to be a problem even before the ink has dried on the page. *Peter Pan* is not only a fairy tale that can be appreciated by both old and young; it embodies a profound philosophy of life, which is found in the symbolic significance of Peter himself. Peter is both mortal and fairy. The mortal part of him is the eternal boy that is in all of us, the sensitive and imaginative child who lives in a world of make-believe, where he has the most wonderful adventures with the most amazing people, with pirates and fairies and crocodiles. The fairies are, if you will, moods by which we can escape, for the time being, from the prison of the flesh and the trammels of material things. Very few of us realize that we are all Peter Pans, that humanity itself is Peter Pan,

eternally childish and foolish, making the same mistakes, and remaining unchanged because it has not the will to change. Peter is terribly lonely; but he possesses that greatest of all assets—courage, and knows the happiness which courage brings.

There is something of Barrie in Maeterlinck. Alfred Sutro records that he once took Maeterlinck to see Barrie in his flat in Adelphi. When he was asked to write his name on the whitewashed wall of the study Maeterlinck added: “Au père de Peter Pan, et au grandpère de *L'Oiseau Bleu*.” But the modern writer to whom Barrie is most closely akin in spirit, is Hans Andersen. Andersen's life was a tragedy—a defeat which issued in victory. His tragedy was that he was never able to grow up, to adapt himself to the privileges and responsibilities of the grown-up world. He wanted to marry Jenny Lind; but she just laughed at him. So he was thrown back on his own thoughts and took refuge in a world of dreams. His tales and legends, like those of Barrie, developed into a blend of the fantastic and the autobiographical. Things that Andersen tells us about sound utterly impossible, because they have never happened to us. But as he continues with his story he plays the trick on us that Barrie is so fond of playing, which he no doubt picked up from the Ancient Mariner. He makes us listen to him, and the moment we begin to do that, we are lost. Andersen's witchery has its way; in a moment we are accepting the incredible as the normal, the fantastic as the veriest commonplace. Take this passage, for example, from Andersen.

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Little Kay has been kidnapped by the Snow Queen, and Gerda and the tame raven are trying to find her.

“ ‘ It seems to me as if someone were behind us,’ said Gerda ; and, in fact, there was a rushing sound as of something passing ; strange-looking shadows flitted rapidly along the wall ; horses with long, slender legs and fluttering manes ; huntsmen, knights, and ladies.

“ ‘ These are only Dreams ! ’ said the Raven ; ‘ they come to amuse the great personages here at night. . . . ’ ”

Was there ever a Peter Pan in the flesh ? There was, and is. He is Peter Llewellyn Davies, London publisher. Barrie tells us about the origin of the play in his Dedication to the five Davies boys. Only three of these boys are living now, and these have been grown-up for years. George, the eldest, was killed in the Great War, and Michael, the fourth, was drowned. Barrie, “ a small gentleman with a black moustache,” met these boys casually during one of his strolls in Kensington Gardens, grew friendly with them, and played with them. The boys were the nephews of Gerald du Maurier, and “ Gerald ” played Captain Hook in the original production of *Peter Pan*, in 1904. Barrie used to take the boys down to stay at Black Cottage near Farnham, and at one time there used to be in existence a volume called *The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island*, which purported to be “ a record of the terrible adventures of three brothers in the summer of 1901 faithfully set forth by No. 3.”

Peter Davies, the third of the five brothers, was then only four years old.

Barrie had already qualified as a full-fledged pirate in his Dumfries school-days, "when the shades of night began to fall." But it was the Davies boys who rekindled his boyhood's ambition to become a bloodthirsty rascal. (What would Margaret Ogilvy have thought if she had seen her son as that man of blood—Captain James Hook?) And it is therefore to the Davies boys, who requickered the "winged seeds, where they (lay) soft and low," that we owe *Peter Pan*. In fact, Barrie himself wrote in his Dedication to "The Five"; "That is all he (Peter Pan) is, the spark I got from you."

Barrie could never remember writing the play :

"Some disquieting confession must be made in printing at last the play of *Peter Pan*; among them this, that I have no recollection of having written it. . . . I remember writing the story of *Peter and Wendy* many years after the production of the play I can haul back to mind the writing of almost every other essay of mine, however forgotten by the pretty public; but this play of Peter, no. . . . Notwithstanding other possibilities, I think I wrote Peter, and if so it must have been in the usual inky way. . . . The strongest evidence that I am the author is to be found, I think, in a now melancholy volume. . . . *The Boy Castaways*. There were many incidents of our Kensington Gardens' days that never got into the book, such as our Antarctic exploits when

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we reached the Pole in advance of Captain Scott and cut our initials on it for him to find, a strange foreshadowing of what was really to happen. In *The Boy Castaways* Captain Hook has arrived but is called Captain Swarthy, and he seems from the pictures to have been a black man.

“ . . . The dog in *The Boy Castaways* seems never to have been called Nana but was evidently in training for that post. He originally belonged to Swarthy (or to Captain Marryat ?), and the first picture of him, lean, skulking, and hunched . . . patrolling the island in that monster’s interests, gives little indication of the domestic paragon he was to become. We lured him away to the better life, and there is, later, a touching picture, a clear forecast of the Darling nursery. . . . Wendy has not yet appeared but . . . Tinker Bell had reached our island before we left it. It was one evening when we climbed the wood carrying No. 4 to show him what the trail was like by twilight. As our lanterns twinkled among the leaves No. 4 saw a twinkle stand still for a moment and he waved his foot gaily to it, thus creating Tink.”

The play of *Peter Pan*, retold as a story, *Peter and Wendy*, was published in 1911. The first paragraph strikes the key-note :

“ All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old, she was playing in a garden, and she plucked

another flower and ran with it to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather delightful, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried : ‘ Oh, why can’t you remain like this for ever ! ’ This was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth Wendy knew that she must grow up. You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end.”

We meet all the old friends here—all the people and not—people we came to know and learned to love in *Peter Pan*—the Newfoundland dog that can turn taps off and on, wolves that run away from anyone who stoops to look back at them from between his legs ; children of the Never-Never Land, whom careless nurses have allowed to fall out of their prams, a cottage with a silk top-hat for its smoking chimney ; a pirate schooner skippered by Captain Hook ; Michael, and Peter himself, who, when Hook asks him who he is, calls back : “ I’m youth, I’m joy.” There is one terrible moment in Peter’s career (the only time, apparently, when this immortal is faced with the common lot of mortals). He is alone in the Mermaids’ Lagoon, on a rock that is gradually being covered by the tide. But a drum beating within him says : “ To die will be an awfully big adventure.” Peter does not die, and the children return very, very happily from their excursion to the Never-Never Land. This is the exquisite ending of the book :

“ As you look at Wendy you may see her hair becoming white, and her figure little again, for

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all this happened long ago. Jane is now a common grown-up, with a daughter called Margaret ; and every spring-cleaning time, except when he forgets, Peter comes for Margaret and takes her to the Neverland, where she tells him stories about himself, to which he listens eagerly. When Margaret grows up she will have a daughter, who is to be Peter's mother in turn : and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless.”

With regard to Captain Hook himself, Barrie threw some interesting side-lights on “ that not wholly unheroic figure,” in a speech to the First Hundred at Eton College, in 1927. The Provost, it seems, had stated that James Hook, although a great Etonian was not a good one. Hook's dying words before prostrating himself into the water where the crocodile was waiting for him, were *Floreat Etona*, and basing his argument on these two words, Barrie took issue with the Provost, and spent an hour in proving that Hook was a good Etonian though not a great one. He explained that although, unfortunately, no records survived about Hook's life at Eton, there was other evidence to support his contention. He was known to have borrowed books, mainly poetry of the Lake School, from the College Library. He was peculiarly distinguished in athletics. He “ bled yellow.” When hard up he used to cut himself slightly for “ three pence and considerably for a strawberry mess.” Like every honest pirate, he had an Aunt Emily

who has shown Peter Pan three of James's school caps hanging on the mantelshelf. He contributed to an Eton newspaper, "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig," which seems to have merit. Whatever he was at Eton he came back there a repentant pirate hermit, tears in his eyes, the deadly hook in his hand. Mr. G. F. T. Jasparin has seen him sitting shadowy at night on the College wall. From the sleeve of his right arm an iron hook struck out. Let Mr. Jasparin tell the story :

"The moon paused for a moment (which it often seems to do over Eton), as if awaiting some singular transaction. I watched the Solitary, and never could I have conceived a Colossus so shrunken. It was mournfully obvious that he was gazing with peeled eyes through the darkness of his present, to the innocence of his past, from the monster he had become on the Spanish Main to the person he had been at Eton, and the effect was heightened by the unclean tears that crawled down his face."

His ghost perches on Hook's Wall the night before the Eton-Harrow match.

"To-night those of you whose windows overlook that wall may see in the light of a pale blue moon that ghost's yearly message round it, 'May our opponents win sometime, but not this time.' Surely a good Etonian. Viewed as a pirate he is another proof of the Etonian's capacity for leadership. In politics he was a Conservative.

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No woman is known to have had any part in his life. ‘Why had so bright a morning to close in such a cataclysm?’ Well, he is maliciously ascribed to Balliol. Perhaps at Oxford he fell among bad companions—Harrovians.”

Some people who do not understand Barrie would have it that he is teaching cowardly evasion, and that Peter Pan, instead of being the most attractive of all the fairies, is the very personification of selfishness. To be sure, Peter is selfish, just as any child is selfish, without being aware of it. But Peter is also a symbol of that youth which we would all gladly recapture. If we could only go back to the threshold between irresponsible childhood and the next stage, knowing what we do now, realizing all the suffering that we have passed through and that we have brought on others, we would certainly hesitate before the step. For, strive as we will, we can never become the kind of person we really would like to become; the years fly past too speedily and are too strong for us. We cannot remain young; that is an inexorable law. But even should we grow heavy with years we can still go into the Valley of the Shadow with the glad look of youth on our faces—if we retain the child outlook on life—and journey hopefully.

CHAPTER X

"ALL MY WOMEN ARE REAL WOMEN"

IN 1930, at a dinner for the benefit of the Royal Literary Fund, Barrie made an appropriate speech. After admitting that he did not have to contend with the problem of creating characters, as they had a habit of leaping spontaneously into being, he went on to talk about his women characters :

"In my notebooks all my women are real women so long as they are just in the notebooks—tremendously determined to tell everything about themselves, to enquire into themselves, to cut themselves open. I would scarify you if you knew the things I intended my heroines to say. But they utterly turn away from me and remain that ghastly word, respectable."

The four plays which we are about to discuss are mainly about women, although at first glance it would not appear so.

It is easy enough to say the obvious about Barrie. It is the obvious in him that has made him the most popular dramatist of his time. It is his skill in fitting the obvious into his dramatic work that has earned the respect of those who understand the architecture of a well-made play, and can appreciate good craftsmanship in the theatre. Having dealt with the outward excellences of Barrie's work, they imagine that they have said all that is to be said about him. Because they can see only the obvious they affect to despise him as a thinker. If they are uneasily conscious

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that there is something in his work that has eluded them, they try to satisfy themselves by calling him “ whimsical ” and “ quaint.” Anyone, they say, can understand Barrie. Even a child could understand him. There they give themselves away, for it is not everyone who retains the imagination of a child. Too many fail to appreciate that there is, in the best of Barrie’s work, what Hazlitt points out in Lamb’s, a “ marrowy vein both in the thought and feeling,” and “ instruction deep and lovely of his subject.” The closest analogy to Barrie is his own Lob, that elusive creature who is partly Peter Pan, and partly the flash that reveals the souls of others. Barrie, like Lob, sends people into the enchanted wood and watches eagerly to see how the adventure will affect them. But only a few learn anything from the experience. The others remain as they were. These are the people who see only the obvious in Barrie. He laughs at them and is sorry for them. But he knows that it has been worth while if even one soul has been stirred and made uneasy at the tragic sight of itself.

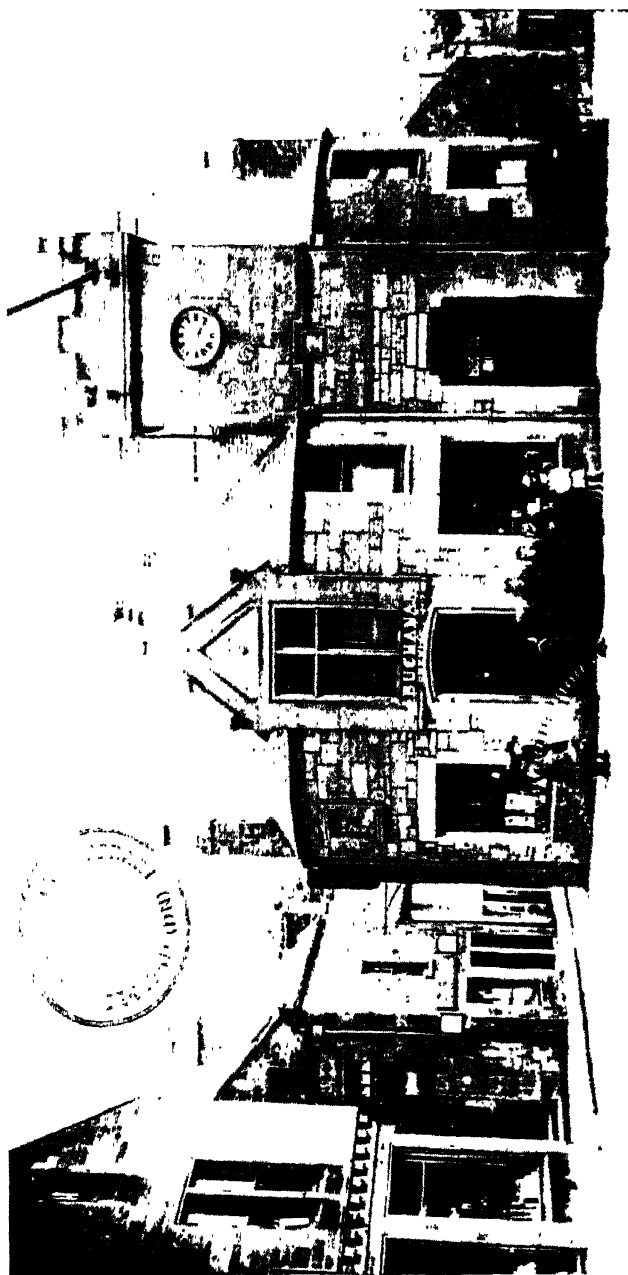
Quality Street was produced at the Vaudeville Theatre on September 17th, 1902. The time of the action is during the stirring days of the Napoleonic Wars, although it may actually have been the Boer War that suggested the idea. The scene is a small country town, a pleasant little place, the atmosphere of which suggests Cranford and old Bath. The details, however, link it with *Sentimental Tommy* and *Thrums*—the blue and white room, for instance, and the Misses Susan and Phœbe

Throssel. Very beautifully, and with a very kindly pen, does Barrie portray these charming ladies. As in *The Little White Bird*, in that perfect piece of artistry, the chapter entitled "The Thrush's Nest," he recaptured the very language of Bunyan, so here he has recaptured the language of Jane Austen.

Quality Street is not only a story of more than a century ago. It has all the charm of a costume play, but its real interest is in the characters. It is the character of the two sisters that gives the play its peculiar fragrance, as of an old-fashioned garden. When Valentine comes back from the Wars and finds Miss Phœbe old and wrinkled ("She looks not ten years older but twenty, and not an easy twenty"), she is afraid that their romance has withered. In a spirit of gallant adventure Miss Phœbe goes to the ball as her own niece, and it is only when Valentine sees the rejuvenated Phœbe that he realizes that he still loves Phœbe of the ringlets. "It is not the flaunting flower men love; it is the modest violet."

"Marry me, Miss Phœbe, and I will take you back through those years of hardships that have made your sweet eyes too patient. Instead of growing older you shall grow younger. We will travel back together to pick up the many little joys and pleasures you had to pass by when you trod that thorny path alone."

The long years of hope deferred have not brought embitterment but a mellowed sweetness, and the



THE HIGH STREET AND THE OLD 'TOWN HOUSE OF KIRRIEMUIR
"The High Street . . . has a picturesqueness of which few towns of its size in Scotland can boast."

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story has a happy ending. Miss Susan had a romance in her youth ; now, when she is getting old she unselfishly relives it again in the happiness of her sister.

“PHOEBE. Sir, the dictates of my heart enjoin me to accept your too flattering offer. (*He kisses her. MISS SUSAN is about to steal away. He kisses MISS SUSAN also ; and here we bid them good-bye.*)”

The Admirable Crichton was first played on November 4th, 1902, at the Duke of York's Theatre. The play has a topical interest—the Labour movement, which Barrie, in whom the journalistic instinct for good copy has never died, turned to such good account. It is a play of contrasts ; many of the most humorous situations arise from these contrasts which Barrie can handle so adroitly. The hero is Crichton, the butler. His master, Lord Loam, thinks himself a democrat when once a month he has his servants in to tea. Crichton hates the practice because it tends to breed false notions of equality among ignorant people. He is a firm believer in class distinctions.

“CRICHTON. The divisions into classes, my lord, are not artificial. They are the natural outcome of a civilised society. There must always be a master and servants in all civilised communities.”

Presently Crichton has a chance to test his theories. The family goes off on a yachting trip ,

accompanied by Crichton and Tweeny, and are wrecked on an island in the Pacific. Crichton, by power of natural leadership, takes command of the castaways, contrives tools, and within two years harnesses water-power and builds a comfortable house for them all. He is "the Gov," a benevolent despot. "A romantic figure, too. One can easily see why the womenfolks of this strong man's house both adore and fear him." He becomes engaged to Lady Mary, vastly changed from "that cold, haughty, insolent girl." But that very night a ship arrives. Crichton might have allowed it to sail away and remained on his island. But, unlike Peter Pan, he determines to give up his fairy-land. "Bill Crichton has got to play the game." He fires the beacons. The ship's boat returns; the party is rescued. But he makes the sacrifice willingly—for an idea.

Barrie places his group of people on an island under conditions where ability and initiative have their chance. People are no more equal there, however, than they were in England. Crichton is the Governor; Lord Loam finds the position of handy-man for which he is naturally fitted.

"TWEENY. Daddy, you're of little use, but you're a bright, cheerful creature to have about the house." (How much of this picture has P. G. Wodehouse borrowed for his Lord Emsworth?)

Barrie is offering no solution of the social problem. He is no would-be reformer like Shaw or Galsworthy.

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His attitude towards the shadow-show of life is more like that of Chaucer, kindly, tolerant, gently amused, and quietly pitying. To change society as it is constituted in England is an impossible dream. He sees its imperfections, but, like Crichton, he prefers to bear those ills we have rather than fly to others that we know not of.

Crichton is admirable, however, not merely because he is loyal to a social system in which he believes ; which for him represents law and order ; he is loyal to an individual. That is more than Lady Mary was. She had the chance to be loyal to Crichton ; but she followed the line of least resistance. In a sense, she, too, was loyal to her caste, and in going back to England she was going back to her own place. The woman who comes out best in the play is Tweeny. She remains devoted to Crichton. And, after all, she is the only woman on the island who has a skirt.

Alice Sit-by-the-Fire was produced at the Duke of York's Theatre on April 5th, 1905. The play might be regarded as a successor to *Ibsen's Ghost*, but very much more subtle and effective. In *The Wedding Guest*, which had appeared at the Garrick Theatre on September 27th, 1900, Barrie seemed to the critics to be taking Ibsen seriously—but not for long. In *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* he parodies and makes fun of the “problem play.” The parody is the obvious thing which made people laugh, but besides that there is the kindly Barrie—the Barrie who could create Richardson, who is Brownie's cousin, and Tweeny's.

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"Steve" (the alleged Villain) has just finished dinner, in his comfortable lodgings. His man, Richardson, is waiting on him. When we wrote that we deliberated a long time. It has an air, and with a little low cunning we could make you think to the very end that Richardson was a male. But if the play is acted and you go to see it, you would be disappointed. Steve, the wretched fellow, never had a Man, and Richardson is only his landlady's slavey, aged about fifteen, and wistful at the sight of food. We introduce her gazing at Steve's platter as if it were a fairy tale. Steve has often caught her with this rapt expression on her face, and sometimes, as now, an engaging game ensues.

"RICHARDSON (*blinking*). Are you finished, sir ?

(To those who know the game this means, 'Are you to leave the other chop—the one sitting lonely and lovely beneath the dish-cover?')

"STEVE. Yes. *(In the game this is merely a tantaliser.)*

"RICHARDSON (*almost sure that he is in the right mood and sending out a feeler*). Then am I to clear ?

"STEVE. No.

(This is intended to puzzle her, but it is a move he has made so often that she understands its meaning at once.)

"RICHARDSON (*in entranced giggles*). He, he, he !

"STEVE (*vacating his seat*). Sit down.

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“ RICHARDSON. Again ?

“ STEVE. Sit down and clear the enemy out of that dish.

(By the enemy he means the other chop ; what a name for a chop. STEVE plays the part of butler. He brings her a plate from the little cupboard.)

“ Dinner is served, madam.”

By his sympathy and kindness Steve, a very ordinary sort of fellow, makes a fairy world for the poor little drudge.

Then there is the more subtle Barrie. Alice, the Colonel's wife, has come back to England, expecting from her children the same enthusiasm and admiration that she has received from the subalterns in India. She is longing to play with them, but she is not prepared to face the problems that almost grown-up children entail. Like Sentimental Tommy and like Peter Pan, she hardly wants to grow up. Her disillusionment might be almost tragic, but Steve is kind and friendly and the Colonel is protecting, and she comes to understand her grown-up children. With gentle resignation she realizes that she can no longer be young. But there are joys that come with the evening in the quiet of one's own fireside.

“ It's summer done, autumn begun, farewell summer. Alice Sit-by-the-Fire henceforth.”

What Every Woman Knows appeared at the Duke of York's Theatre in 1905. Not only is this one of the most delightful plays that Barrie ever wrote,

but from the point of view of dramatic technique it is in the very first rank. The obvious, topical interests of the play are the appearance of Labour members in Parliament, and woman's interest in politics. But what makes *What Every Woman Knows* unusually interesting is the study of character, especially Scottish character. Barrie is back with the people he knew best and whom he most thoroughly understood. His touch is absolutely certain when he is reproducing the eccentricities of the speech and actions of the Wylie brothers, and of the ambitious John Shand. The Wylies seem cold and calculating when it comes to a business deal, but they are kind and considerate when it concerns their sister. And John Shand has to learn a most salutary lesson before the play is finished. It is the sympathy and devotion of these three men to their sister, contrasting them sharply with John Shand, which makes the play an intimate personal study and a real contribution to Scottish and English literature. Another striking contrast is between Maggie, with her concealed cleverness, her imagination and her self-control, and the beautiful, empty-headed, and selfish Lady Sybil, who has no particularly high moral standard. It has been said that Barrie did not understand women of Lady Sybil's class. The truth is that he understood them only too well. The *Comtesse* is far more discerning; she comes to understand Maggie's ability and her amazing unselfishness. But Lady Sybil is incapable of understanding either. In the end John Shand's eyes are opened to his own blindness and conceit, and he returns

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contritely to Maggie. She is too wise to reproach her husband. All she has done is to make it possible for him and Lady Sybil to see much of each other ; she has gambled and won. Not that John Shand ever learns about the trick that has been played on him ; that would have driven him into the arms of the other woman and brought about his political ruin. By her sense of humour Maggie is able to look at the situation from another point of view than her own, and to solve the problem. And a sense of humour is what John sorely needs.

“ MAGGIE. . . . It's nothing unusual I've done, John. Every man who is high up loves to think that he has done it all himself ; and the wife smiles, and lets it go at that. It's our only joke. Every woman knows that. . . . Oh, John, if only you could laugh at me.

“ JOHN. I can't laugh, Maggie. . . .

“ MAGGIE. Laugh, John, laugh. Watch me ; see how easy it is.

(A terrible struggle is taking place within him. He creaks. Something that may be mirth forces a passage, at first painfully, no more joy in it than in the discoloured water from a spring that has long been dry. Soon, however, he laughs, loud and long. The spring water is becoming clear. MAGGIE claps her hands. He is saved.) ”

The general thesis of *What Every Woman Knows* is that a woman has in her hands the making or the marring of a man, and that man is terribly dependent on women, no matter how strong and independent

he thinks he is. Some smart London critic once said that *What Every Woman Knows* was a play about a man who had really married his mother. There is more truth than fiction in this statement. The final secret of John Shand's happiness is to be found in Maggie's love for him—the love of the strong for the weak, the love of a mother for her son. From this time on all Barrie's best plays are based on this underlying *motif*—*Dear Brutus*, *A Well-Remembered Voice*, *A Kiss for Cinderella*, *The Old Lady Shows her Medals*, *Barbara's Wedding*, and *Mary Rosè*. It must have pleased Margaret Ogilvy tremendously when she knew that her mother love was stronger than death and that her son revered her memory to the end.

CHAPTER XI

“BUT IT NEEDS HEAVEN-SENT MOMENTS
FOR THIS SKILL”

FOR ten years after the production of *What Every Woman Knows* Barrie wrote nothing but one-act plays. Trifles like *Josephine*, *Punch* (a toy tragedy), and *Pantaloon*, *Old Friends*, which attacks the problem of heredity, *The Slice of Life*, which satirises the “triangle” problem play, *The Dramatists Get What They Want*, which deals with the problem of stage censorship, *Rosy Rapture*, *The Pride of the Beauty Chorus*, are, like *Little Mary*, amusing or clever or both, but have no permanent value. *Shakespeare’s Legacy*, which was acted by Gerald du Maurier and Lily Elsie at Drury Lane Theatre in 1916, is Barrie’s contribution to the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy. What this legacy was he explained more fully in a droll speech when he was enrolled as an honorary Freeman and Liveryman of the Stationers’ Company in 1925.

“A scrap of paper proves conclusively that Bacon did not write the plays, and so far, good, but Bacon was not the only author in that household. This document, as I am told and will soon know for certain, is signed by Shakespeare, and is in these words: ‘Received from Lady Bacon for fathering her play of Hamlet, Five Pounds.’ . . . After all, that old Liveryman of this Company was probably the wise one who said to Ben Jonson, I think, ‘I know not, Sir, whether Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare, but if

he did not, it seems to me that he missed the opportunity of his life.' ”

The best of the Barrie one-act plays, as regards construction and characterization, is *The Twelve-Pound Look*. The introduction tells the story.

“If quite convenient (as they say about cheques) you are to conceive that the scene is laid in your own house, and that Harry Sims is you. Perhaps the ornamentation of the house is a trifle ostentatious, but if you cavil at that we are willing to re-decorate: you don't get out of being Harry Sims on mere matter of plush and dados. It pleases us to make him a city man, but (rather than lose you) he can be turned with a scrape of the pen into a K.C., fashionable doctor, Secretary of State, or what you will. We conceive him of a pleasant rotundity, with a thick, red neck, but we shall waive that point if you know him to be thin.

“It is that day in your career when everything went wrong just when everything seemed to be superlatively right.

“In Harry's case it was a woman who did the mischief. She came to him in his great hour and told him that she did not admire him.”

It is not an unique situation. A high-spirited wife refuses to live with a bumptious fool of a self-made husband, who thinks entirely in terms of self and success. Sent to his house by an agency to type letters, she tells him why she left him. It was

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not on account of another man, but because she found her husband's conceit was insufferable. This goads him to fury. He was looking forward to being knighted, but now see what she has done. She has spoilt the day for him. The little fool. Does she not know whom she is speaking to? Has she no respect for her betters? She knows only too well whom she is speaking to, and has every respect for her betters; but none for Harry Sims. Barrie is here pointing out that worldly success counts for but little if people who ought to admire you, don't. So the successful husband, who is a failure, dismisses the unappreciative Kate, and turns for admiration to his meek wife, only to find in her eyes the dangerous “Twelve-Pound Look.”

“ SIR HARRY (*jovially, but with an enquiring eye*). What a different existence yours is from that poor lonely wretch's.

“ LADY SIMS. Yes, but she has a very contented face.

“ SIR HARRY (*with a stamp of his foot*). All put on. What?

“ LADY SIMS (*timidly*). I didn't say anything.

“ SIR HARRY (*snapping*). One would think you envied her.

“ LADY SIMS. Envied? Oh, no—but I thought she looked so alive. It was while she was working the machine.

“ SIR HARRY. Alive! That's no life. It is you that are alive. (*Curtly*) I'm busy, Emmy. (*He sits at his writing-table.*)

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"LADY SIMS (*dutifully*). I'm sorry; I'll go, Harry. (*Inconsequently*) Are they very expensive?

"SIR HARRY. What?

"LADY SIMS. Those machines?

(When she has gone the possible meaning of her question startles him. The curtain hides him from us, but we may be sure that he will soon be bland again. We have a comfortable feeling, you and I, that there is nothing of HARRY SIMS in us.)"

Rosalind was produced at the Duke of York's Theatre on October 14th, 1912. A young Oxford man with "a nice taste in the arts that has come to him by way of socks, spats, and slips," falls in love with a charming actress. He goes to see his divinity "in a cottage by the sea," but finds on the sofa a middle-aged woman whom he takes to be her mother. For a time she keeps up the joke and then explains there is no daughter. Young Roche goes off cured. Light as the treatment of the theme is, the little play is definitely related to Barrie's other work. The professional actress remains like Peter Pan, in the Fairy-land of Youth, but the woman chooses the actual world with its disillusionments and responsibilities.

In 1913, *The Will* and *The Adored One* were produced. *The Will* is a parable, the moral being as in *The Twelve-Pound Look*, that money is far from certain to bring happiness.

"PHILIP. Why did things go wrong?

"MR. DEVIZES. A spot no bigger than a pin's

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head, but waiting to spread and destroy them in the fullness of time. It gets nearly everybody in the end if they don't look out.”

The Adored One which was first played on September 4th, 1913, had a curious history. It was badly received and Barrie re-wrote it after a fortnight, the new version being staged three weeks later. The leading character, Leonora, was introduced into a later play, entitled *Seven Women*, which was produced at the New Theatre in 1917. The playlet met with a better reception in New York, where it was produced under the title *The Legend of Leonora*, Maude Adams taking the lead. But the most sophisticated of the Barrie one-act plays is *Half an Hour*. Again we have the Barrie satire on the woman of position. The company who have gathered at Mr. Garson's house for dinner, are discussing a street tragedy, which Dr. Brodie is describing. A young engineer had been run over just as he was about to elope with another man's wife. That wife was Lady Lilian Garson, whom the Doctor discovers to be his hostess. He carries off the situation admirably. So does Lady Lilian. They are talking about the woman in the case.

“ DR. BRODIE. As I walked here I was picturing her in dire desolation.

“ LADY LILIAN. Don't you think she may be in dire desolation still ?

“ DR. BRODIE. Thinking it over, Lady Lilian, I have come to the conclusion . . . that I was a

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sentimental fellow, wasting my sympathy on that lady."

In 1914 the Great War broke out and Barrie's dramatic activity assumed a new phase. Barrie felt the war deeply. Suffering keenly through the deaths of promising young friends and relations, he found a natural outlet for his thoughts and emotions in the theatre.

Der Tag was a piece of propaganda. *The New Word* is much better. The Second Lieutenant was hardly known to the British public before the war when he suddenly became a somebody—THE somebody who stood between Englishmen and Germans. More, he—the new word became the symbol of sacrifice. The play is simply a conversation between "any father and any son," the night before the boy goes to France. That is all.

On March 3rd, 1916, *A Kiss for Cinderella* was produced at Wyndham's. *A Kiss for Cinderella* is a very beautiful and tender little thing, a fairy tale brought up-to-date, and placed in a modern setting. Very delicately and sympathetically, Barrie explores the mind of the poor little drudge and finds romance there—romance which makes life possible and endurable for her and raises her for one brief moment to be the equal of Princes. No one but Barrie would have dreamed of making a Fairy Godmother out of a Red Cross nurse; no one but Barrie would have taken the trouble to follow the dream processes of a waif like Cinderella. No one but Barrie would have dreamed of creating a

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Cockney King ; but that would naturally be Cinderella's idea of what a King was like ; he was not vulgar for Cinderella. At a touch of Barrie's magic wand Cinderella's rags disappear and she becomes beautiful ; she has even a hint of greatness about her. “ But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill.”

A year after “ Cinderella,” *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* appeared at the New Theatre. Here again Barrie is back with his own people and never in all his works are pathos and humour more closely twined. Within the limits of this little play two characters are revealed and developed, with the three charwomen acting as a sort of Greek chorus.

Once again Barrie proves that poverty and romance may go hand in hand and that the beautiful things of life can be found at any time by those who know where to look for them. The wizened little old woman, whom life had thwarted so cruelly, won in the end. She had her romance, when her day was far spent and there seemed nothing for her but to go to bed. But the memory of those wonderful days would never fade so long as life itself lasted. We have our last glimpse of the Old Lady a month or two after Kenneth's death in action—a lonely little figure, pathetic but gallant—a symbol of the most beautiful qualities of our poor frail humanity. Barrie's technique here is that of the opening of *What Every Woman Knows*. No words are spoken ; action is all.

“ It is early morning, and she is having a look

at her medals before setting off on the daily round. They are in a drawer, with the scarf covering them, and on the scarf a piece of lavender. First, the black frock which she carries in her arms like a baby. Then her War Savings Certificates. KENNETH's bonnet, a thin packet of real letters, and the famous champagne cork. She kisses the letters, but she does not blub over them. She strokes the dress, and waggles her head over the certificates and presses the bonnet to her cheeks, and rubs the tinsel of the cork carefully with her apron. She is a tremulous old 'un; yet she exults, for she owns all these things, and also the penny flag on her breast. She puts them away in the drawer, the scarf over them, the lavender on the scarf. Her air of triumph well becomes her. She lifts the pail and the mop, and slouches off gamely to the day's toil."

Another of Barrie's little war-time studies is *Barbara's Wedding* (1918). The old Colonel, whose mind has become clouded with advancing years, knows nothing of the war. He lives in a world of the past; he will have it that it is Barbara's wedding-day, and that he is waiting to hear the church bells ring. His wife, a sweet, patient woman, tries to explain the sorely changed situation to him. She tells him about the war. It is Barbara's wedding-day but it is not Billy boy whom she is marrying. It is the gardener, who has risen in the world as a result of the topsy-turvydom of the times.

But the effort of living in the present is too much

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for the old man and he drifts away from it again into the effortless land of memories. He asks his wife to read to him.

“ COLONEL. . . . Read to me—something funny, if you please. About Sam Weller ! No, I expect Sam has gone to the wars. Read about Mr. Pickwick. He is very amusing.”

There is perhaps nothing more exquisitely tender in modern dramatic literature than *Barbara's Wedding*.

A Well-Remembered Voice (1918) is the last of the war plays. During these years of almost universal suffering, many people turned to spiritualism, hoping to find some link with those whom they had lost. In this play the son who has been killed, comes back, not to his mother, in the artificial atmosphere of the séance, but to his lonely father, as he sits at home trying to read his paper.

“ I didn't know till now that you were the one who would miss me most ; but I know now.”

(*They chat happily together.*)

“ MR. DON. Let me look at you again, Dick. There is such a serenity about you now.

“ DICK. Serenity—that's the word. . . . It's a ripping good thing to have. I should be awfully bucked if you would have it, too.”

Through his war plays, Barrie was personally brought into close touch with the supernatural and led to take a firmer grip of the unseen realities. The war plays emphasize that the life of the spirit is the

real life. Along with *Dear Brutus* they form a natural transition to *Mary Rose*.

During the war years we have occasional glimpses of Barrie. In September, 1914, along with Mr. A. E. W. Mason and Mr. T. L. Gilmour he went to the United States at the request of the British Government. He resolutely declined to be reviewed, but just before sailing for England he wrote an amusing and characteristic account of an imaginary interview between a newspaper-man and Brown, Sir James's butler-valet. The story, entitled "Barrie at Bay. Which was Brown?" appeared anonymously in the *New York Times* of October 1st, 1914. In the beginning of 1918, a Red Cross Sale was held at Christie's. Barrie was chairman and E. V. Lucas secretary of the Books and Manuscripts Committee. Among the contributions received, in aid of the Red Cross, was a copy of *Vanity Fair*, which Thackeray himself had presented to Charlotte Brontë. Robertson Nicoll was the donor, and on February 12th, Barrie wrote to Nicoll acknowledging the gift:

"Charlotte Brontë's *Vanity Fair* will certainly be one of our choicest items in the Christie's sale, and in the name of the Committee, including myself, I thank you warmly. It is really good of you to offer yourself up in this way, and one may say 'If thus all!' But we seem to be doing well, especially in MSS. I sometimes feel it would be more entertaining to invent things than to appeal for them (Lot 100—four letters from Shakespeare

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to Lady Bacon, showing that she wrote the plays, etc.).”

In the end the book realized £325 10s.

After the war, perhaps by way of relaxation, Barrie wrote a ballet for the Russian dancer, Karsavina, *The Truth about the Russian Dancers*, and in 1922, *Shall We Join the Ladies?* was first acted at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. The host in *Shall We Join the Ladies?* has a touch of Lob, but the play can hardly be called a serious treatment. It is partly social satire, partly a detective story, and partly jesting. Perhaps the moral of this playlet is that each of us has a conscience which haunts us, and that there are secrets in the lives of the most unlikely.

CHAPTER XII

“A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM AND THE LONELY EDGE OF THE OCEAN OF THE LOST ATLANTIC”

TWO of the greatest of Barrie’s plays remain to be discussed—*Dear Brutus* (1917) and *Mary Rose* (1920). Perhaps the gist of the philosophy of *Dear Brutus* is that chance matters comparatively little in this life, and that character is everything. Character is fate. If we wish to change, we must mould and develop character; we must strive earnestly after the best things. To depend on chance is to lean against the wind. A happy accident may alter our circumstances; it cannot change our character, cannot bring us happiness. The play presents the doctrine of the second chance.

In *Dear Brutus* we are at once plunged into an atmosphere of mystery :

“The scene is a darkened room, which the curtain reveals so stealthily that if there was a mouse on the stage it is there still. Our object is to catch our two chief characters unawares; They are Darkness and Light.

“The room is so obscure as to be invisible, but at the back of the obscurity are french windows, through which is seen Lob’s garden, bathed in moonshine. The darkness and light, which this room and garden represent, are very still, but we should feel that it is only a pause in which old enemies regard each other before they come to the grip. The moonshine stealing about among

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the flowers, to give them their last instructions, has left a smile upon them, but it is a smile with a menace in it for the dwellers in darkness. What we expect to see next is the moonshine slowly pushing the windows open, so that it may whisper to a confederate in the house, whose name is Lob.”

What do these hard words mean ? The play itself gives the key. The “ dwellers in darkness ” are human beings moving about confusedly in the mists of this life ; Lob, with a touch of the eternal, the Universal, lives in the clear light of the garden. In the play, these “ dwellers in darkness ” are those who have not followed the gleam. Some are content with their lives, like Coady ; some see that they have failed but blame their failure on bad luck, like Matey. If they were actually given a second chance, would they really take it ? (In *The Little White Bird* Peter found too late that he had no second chance, but would he have taken it if it had not been too late ?)

From this room Lob sends his guests into the mysterious wood on Midsummernight. They wander through the past into the Might-Have-Been and all but Dearth are neither better nor happier than they were before. The actual Dearth is a melancholy, tippling failure of an artist and a man. In the wood the Dearth of the Might-Have-Been is “ ablaze in happiness and health and a daughter.” Barrie is never happier and more charming than in his conversation between these two, and their radiant happiness

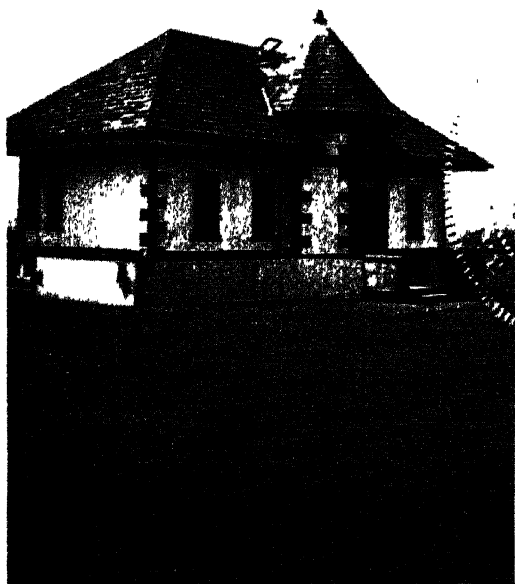
makes all the more poignant the scene where Dearth wakes up to his loneliness in the actual world. The scene in the wood is like Lamb's *Dream Children*, but there the pathos does not wring out hearts; Lamb had not missed the turning which led to happiness and children, for he had deliberately chosen the path of self-sacrifice. But Dearth is not pathetic; he is tragic, for through his own lack of will-power he has lost his early vision. Was it the tragic sense of incompleteness that looked out from Gerald du Maurier's eyes, as he played the part of Dearth, which sent his little daughter Daphne sobbing from the theatre?

Barrie has been accused of seeking to shun the realities of life. In *The Little White Bird* when Captain W—— visits Mary's house, the maid shows him that things have been pieced together out of remnants, that the sofa is built of packing-cases, the desk out of three orange boxes:

"I looked around me despairingly, and my eye lighted on the holland covering. 'There is a fine chandelier in that holland bag,' I said coaxingly.

"She sniffed and was raising an untender hand when I checked her. 'Forbear, Ma'am,' I cried with authority. 'I prefer to believe in that bag. How much to be pitied, ma'am, are those who have lost faith in everything.'"

But there is no shirking the issues of life, no refusal to look at it steadily in this passage of strong and beautiful symbolism, when Dearth gradually comes



THE CRICKET PAVILION "STANDING ON
THIS HILL OF MEMORIES"



KIRRIEMUIR

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back from his dream and returns to the emptiness and the sordidness of the present. It is impossible to believe that *Dear Brutus*, with all its skilful craftsmanship, with its subtle analysis of character, with all its haunting beauty, was written merely to prove, as one cynic said, that things can never be the same again but always are. No, this masterpiece with its beautiful symbolism, its persuasiveness, by means which are almost mystic, places Barrie without all question or cavil among the masters.

“ We were on our way in a boat to fish the Outer Hebrides (where we caught Mary Rose).” *Mary Rose* is a weird play—as weird a thing as Barrie has ever given us, with the exception, perhaps, of *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan*.

“ So far have we come,” writes Mr. Harvey Darton of *Dear Brutus* and *Mary Rose*, “ all the way from *A Window in Thrums* to a midsummer night’s dream and the lonely edge of the Ocean of the lost Atlantis. There is nothing quite like such a progress in modern English letters, nor indeed in our literature at all. In these last two plays . . . Barrie has reached a measure of full stature. Perhaps he has really grown up. But there is something of the earliest Barrie whose dreams first came to him in a little Scottish village in all he has written, even when he is peering between the interstices of the stars. . . . He is sure of life as books go. He has touched our ordinary humanity too firmly to leave no impress. He began as ‘ eminent ’ in a ‘ fashion ’ of the

moment with rivals, imitators, parodists. You cannot imitate or parody *Dear Brutus*, nor invent a new *Peter Pan*. You cannot even improve on the technique of *The Admirable Crichton*. Nor can you, except by his own gifts which you cannot possess, be so honestly loved as he—this hidden, impersonal writer whose sombre, humorous eyes seem always to be looking into your soul, laughing at you and with you, persuading you of any absurdity, any sorrow.”

Ever since the far-off days of Thomas the Rhymer, various of our writers have sought a better acquaintance with the mystic land of faery. But few have penetrated very far into the country. True Thomas did :

True Thomas lay on Huntly bank ;
A ferlie he spied with his e'e ;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon tree. . . .

“ Now ye maun go with me,” she said,
“ True Thomas, ye maun go with me ;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe, as chance may be.”

And fewer still have mastered, what John Dryden calls “ The Fairy Way of Writing,” a phrase which Joseph Addison explains in one of the *Spectator* papers :

“ There is a kind of writing, wherein the poet quite loses sight of Nature, and entertains his reader's imagination with the characters and actions of such persons as have many of them no

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existence, but what he bestows on them. Such are fairies, witches, magicians, demons, and departed spirits.

“ There is a very odd turn of thought required for this sort of writing, and it is impossible for a poet to succeed in it, who has not a particular cast of fancy, and an imagination naturally fruitful and superstitious. Besides this he ought to be very well versed in legends and fables, antiquated romances, and the traditions of nurses and old women, that he may fall in with our natural prejudices, and humour those notions which we have imbibed in our infancy. For otherwise he will be apt to make his fairies talk like people of his own species, and not like other sets of beings, who converse with different objects, and think in a different manner from that of mankind. . . . There are many intellectual beings in the world besides ourselves, and several species of spirits, who are subject to different laws and economies from those of mankind. . . . Our forefathers looked upon Nature with more reverence and horror, before the world was enlightened by learning and philosophy, and loved to astonish themselves with the apprehensions of witchcraft, prodigies, charms, and enchantments. There was not a village in England that had not a ghost in it, the churchyards were all haunted, every large common had a circle of fairies belonging to it, and there was scarce a shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit.

“ Among all the poets of this kind our English

are much the best " and " among the English, Shakespeare has incomparably excelled all others. . . . There is something so wild and yet so solemn in the speeches of his ghosts, fairies, witches, and the like imaginary persons, that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, though we have no rule by which to judge of them, and must confess, if there are such beings in the world, it looks highly probable that they should talk and act as he has represented them."

The man who has best mastered this " fairy way of writing " is James Hogg. *Kilmeny*, like *Mary Rose*, is beautiful and dreamlike and tinged with an unearthly beauty. It is as if Hogg had been attempting " to put clothes of silk and wool and linen upon the intangible," and had succeeded. What wonderful talks they must have had in that timeless land, when they got together, these three, True Thomas, Kilmeny, and Mary Rose.

Bonny Kilmeny gaed up the glen ;
 But it was na to meet Duneira's men,
 Nor the rosy monk of the isle to see,
 For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
 It was only to hear the yorlin sing,
 And pu' the cress-flower round the spring ;
 The scarlet hypp and the hindberrye,
 And the nut that hung frae the hazel-tree ;
 For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
 But lang may her minny look o'er the wa',
 And lang may she seek i' the greenwood shaw ;
 Lang the laird of Duneira blame,
 And lang, lang greet or Kilmeny come hame !
 When many a day had come and fled,
 When grief grew calm and hope was dead,

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When mass for Kilmeny’s soul had been sung,
When the beadsmen had prayed and the dead-bell rung,
Late, late in a gloamin’, when all was still,
When the fringe was red on the westlin’ hill,
The wood was sere, the moon i’ the wane,
The reek o’ the cot hung over the plain
Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane ;
When the ingle lowed with an eiry leme,
Late, late in the gloamin’ Kilmeny came hame !

Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace,
But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny’s face ;
As still was her look, and as still was her ee,
As the stillness that lay on the emerant lea,
Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
For Kilmeny had been she knew not where,
And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare ;
Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
Where the rain never fell and the wind never blew,
But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung
And the airs of heaven played round her tongue
When she spake of the lovely forms she had seen,
And a land where sin had never been. . . .

Then Kilmeny begged again to see
The friends she had left in her own countrye,
To tell of the place where she had been,
And the glories that lay in the land unseen. . . .
When seven lang years had come and fled,
When grief was calm and hope was dead,
When scarce was remembered Kilmeny’s name,
Late, late in a gloamin’ Kilmeny came hame ! . . .
When a month and a day had come and gane,
Kilmeny sought the greenwood wene,
There laid her down on the leaves so green,
And Kilmeny on earth was never mair seen !

Kilmeny had, in the words of an old Gaelic folk tale, the “ vision of the two worlds.” So had Mary Rose. Both *Mary Rose* and *Dear Brutus* assume not only the possibility, but the fact of a dual existence. In the one, which men loosely refer to as “ the

present," they parcel their little lives out into terms of time, and are restless and fearful, and torment themselves with the vanity of caring for little things. In the other existence, there is no such thing as time; there is neither yesterday, to-day, nor to-morrow. People are calm because they need not hurry. They do not grow old and grey. They do not worry about the future because they have slipped out of the experience of time and have passed into eternity. They do not worry about trifles because all these former things have passed away, and "in the abode where the eternal are," serenity has become their natural dower. The most poignant scene in *Mary Rose* is when Mary is brought home after twenty years, and she meets her loved ones who have been conscious of the passing of time, while she herself has not.

Has the play a meaning? Was it written as Dr. Johnson said of *The Beggar's Opera*, "to divert without any moral purpose"? Or, is it possible that the meaning is simply that anyone returning to his old home and to the scenes of his youth is bound to meet with disillusionment? In Johnson's *Rambler*, Serotinus describes how he had spent all his working years getting money and reputation, and expected a triumphant reception on his return home. He entered the town in style. The noise of his carriage wheels and his horse's hoofs on the cobbles brought people to their doors and windows, but only to stare. Within an hour he saw things as they were: "no smoke of bonfires, no harmony of bells, no shout of crowds, nor riot of joy." He

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sat down to a splendid lonely dinner and began to reflect :

“ Of the friends whose compliments I expected, some had long ago moved to distant provinces, some had lost in the maladies of age all sense of another’s prosperity, and some had forgotten our former intimacy amidst care and distresses. . . . All those whom I loved, feared, or hated, all whose envy or whose kindness I had hopes of contemplating with pleasure, were swept away, and their place was filled by a new generation with other views and other competitions.”

If this is the sole meaning of Barrie’s play, why should the author take so much pains to bring us into touch with the supernatural? The devices he employs to create atmosphere—the deserted house, the mildewy smell, the door closing mysteriously, the slow transition from the present, with the shivering caretaker and the bronzed Australian soldier, to the happy days when real people lived there—Mary Rose herself, her father and mother—these are more than mere stage devices. Barrie feels the reality of the other world, the reality of the things of the spirit. He deals with the fundamentals of human nature, with those parts that do not change. The problem of *Mary Rose* has no special relation to the twentieth century, but to all time. Mary Rose is not the mortal, but the immortal part in us. She is youth herself—the spirit of youth that remains while we grow old and frail.

Age shall not weary her nor the years condemn.

When, in the first scene, Mary Rose bursts into the sitting-room to announce her engagement to Harry, Mr. Morland tells the young man in private about an experience which Mary once had years before in the Hebrides. It was on an island shunned by the natives, the name of which meant in English "The Island that Likes to be Visited." Mary had disappeared for ten days, and was quite unaware that she had been gone for more than a few minutes. Her parents had never told her about the adventure.

After her marriage Mary went back to the same island. Voices called her and she went away for the second time. This time she was away in the timeless land for twenty-five years. When she came back she knew no change. "Do you think she should have come back?" her father asked Mr. Cameron, the one-time gillie. That is the kernel of the play. How would they feel—those who have passed into the timeless land—if they were to come back to us, and see our sorrow and pain, our false valuations, our stupidities in the face of eternity? Neither would understand the other's language. In the last act Mary Rose talks to her son, as a ghost. He knows who she is, but she cannot guess who he is. And when he realizes that she is looking not for him, but for the child of her memories, he mercifully, very mercifully, refrains from telling her.

Mary Rose grew to young womanhood, attained the glory of motherhood, and retained the heart of a child. Had she grown old, and overcome the tempests of life, she might have become a serene and

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beautiful old lady, over whose grave they might have written : “ In grateful memory of one whose heart was always as fresh as the spring,” knowing that only the frail shell was there, not the sweet soul which once inhabited it. But Mary Rose was still young when she heard the voices and went away. She escaped sorrow and hardship, but she missed the development that they bring, and when she did come back, plaintive and searching, she was a piteous little figure so that the kindest thing was to wish her away again.

“ It is a celestial music that is calling for Mary Rose. . . . As it wraps her round, the weary little ghost knows that her long day is done. . . . Harry hears nothing, but he knows that somehow a prayer has been answered.”

She is a symbol like Peter Pan and Lob, Barrie’s other timeless ones. Like Lob she can point others to the light, but like Peter Pan she cannot come back and take part in the world that she has left.

CHAPTER XIII

"SAIL THOU ON"

SOMEHOW we do not think of Barrie as a public speaker. We think of him as a journalist, a novelist, a dramatist, as the writer of delightful prefaces to books by Mrs. Oliphant, Boyd Cable, Captain Scott, Leonard Merrick, Daisy Ashford, and Lord Lytton. Students of his earlier career remember that he wrote "Scotland's Lament" when Robert Louis Stevenson died, a few parodies in the early nineties, some verses entitled "John Nicol," which appeared in *Good Words* in April, 1891, part of the libretto of *Jane Annie*, and an occasional charming little story for a friend; but most people fail to realize that a speech by Barrie is as much a part of the Barrie tradition as are *Peter Pan* and *Mary Rose*. Some of these speeches are among the Barrie classics, especially "Courage," his Rectorial address to the students of St. Andrews, and "The Entrancing Life," his address as Chancellor of Edinburgh University. If during these later years he has written little, he has shown us a new fashion of speech-making, which is as unique as are his stage directions, and as impossible to imitate.

It is a *genre* of speech-making that is a compound of delicate and subtle humour and a mellow philosophy that has been built up out of his experience of life. There is nothing *extempore* in the Barrie speeches, although they seem to be *extempore*. They are very carefully prepared and given in a strong, low-pitched voice, while he looks anywhere but at

the audience or the microphones. Seldom by laugh or smile does he give any indication as to whether he is enjoying his own wit or not.

1922 was a memorable year in Barrie's career, even more so than 1913, when he was made a baronet. His name appeared in the New Year's Honours List in the Order of Merit, the most select of British Orders, and retained in the private gift of the King. The Order included only one other man of letters, Thomas Hardy. On May 3rd, Lord Haig was installed as Chancellor of the University of St. Andrews, and Barrie as Lord Rector. It was on that occasion that he delivered the address on "Courage." Robertson Nicoll was too ill to attend the ceremony and receive an honorary degree, but he wrote to his friend :

“I had set my heart on being among your audience on an occasion which will be, I am sure, historical. . . . I wish you the utmost success. . . . I trust, my dear friend, that you will be brought well through this trying ordeal, and I shall be interested to hear your impressions when you get back.”

In expressing his regrets to the Principal, Nicoll wrote :

“When I remember how Barrie used to talk about the Scottish students and about his climbing the ladder, I feel that I ought to be beside him in the great day of his pride.”

On his return to London Barrie told Nicoll all about it.

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“What a wonderful success the whole Barrie business was!” Nicoll wrote to a friend. “He came up to my sickroom on Saturday evening and described all the pilgrimages he had gone through. What struck me was the absence of a single jarring note and the perfect understanding of the whole reception.”

In acknowledging a copy of the Address when it was published, Nicoll wrote to Barrie :

“It made me very proud and very happy to receive your beautiful book—beautiful in every way, and with an inscription which could never be excelled in my experience. What a long journey we have had together! and if the end for me is approaching yet I look back on the past with great thankfulness, and one of the most thankworthy things is my association with you, which has always been a source of much happiness and pride to me, and which is crowned by your gift.”

The London *Times* said that it was a “rectorial address the like of which can never before have been heard by any body of students.” Courage with a light heart, “greet the unseen with a cheer” was Barrie’s inspiring message to the Red Gowns about to face the world. Fight the good fight against the devils of darkness and despair. That was also Stevenson’s message to his generation :

“It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live

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and be done with it than to die daily in the sick-room. By all means begin your folio : even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitated about once a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. . . . Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. . . . And does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably struggling to an end in sandy deserts ? ”

The message came with stronger force from Barrie because he was speaking to a generation of young men and women who were sorely bewildered by the uncertainties of the “brave new world” that had taken the place of the old. He recommended a League of Youth to make the old world better—the old world that their elders had made such a mess of ; but at the same time he cautioned his audience : “Do not be too sure that we have learned our lesson, and are not at this very moment doddering down some brimstone path.” No shirking the issue here. The real failures in life are those who lack the moral courage to face issues ; those who grapple with their problems and seek to overcome their weaknesses may be failures in their own eyes, but to them must go the palm of victory in the end :

“Our sympathy . . . must go rather to the less fortunate, the braver ones who ‘turn their necessity to glorious gain’ after they have put

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away their dreams. To the others will go the easy prizes of life—success, which has become a somewhat odious onion nowadays, chiefly because we so often give the name to the wrong thing. When you reach the evening of your days you will, I think, see, with, I hope, becoming cheerfulness—that we are all failures, at least, all the best of us. The greatest Scotsman that ever lived wrote himself down a failure :

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow
And softer flame.
But thoughtless follies laid him low
And stained his name.

“Perhaps the saddest lines in poetry, written by a man who could make things new for the gods themselves.”

It must have been a wonderful moment when Barrie read to his audience part of Captain Scott's last letter to him, written in that lonely tent in the Antarctic, with Death already touching him on the shoulder :

“We are pegging out in a very comfortless spot. Hoping this letter may be found and sent to you, I write you a word of farewell. I want you to think well of me and my end. . . . Good bye—I am not at all afraid of the end, but sad to miss many a simple pleasure which I had planned for the future in our long marches. . . . We are in a desperate state—feet frozen, etc.,

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no fuel, and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and our cheery conversation. . . . We are very near the end. . . . We did intend to finish ourselves when things proved like this, but we have decided to die naturally without.”

In a passage of the letter which Barrie did not read, Scott left his wife and his son, Peter, in Barrie's charge, a trust that was well and truly kept. Barrie loved the company of adventurous spirits, sharing their burdens and vicariously their “hair-breadth 'scapes by flood and field.” When he met Scott just after the explorer's first return from the Antarctic, he was unable to tear himself away from him that night. “In vain he escorted me through the streets of London to my home, for when he had said good-night I then escorted him to his, and so it went on I know not for how long through the small hours.” Shortly before Scott left on his last immortal journey, he and his friend Edward Wilson spent a holiday in Prosen, the scene of the banishment of Sentimental Tommy, and the place where the Old Lady came from. It was Barrie who sent them there. After the tragedy of the Antarctic, the good folk of the glen proudly remembered that two of these heroic figures had once lived in their midst, and so they put up a memorial fountain by the roadside, which bears the following inscription :

“Given to the care of the people of Cortachy for them to hold in remembrance of Robert Falcon Scott and Edward Adrian Wilson, who

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knew this glen. They reached the South Pole on 17th January, 1912, and died together on the great ice barrier, March, 1912. *For the journey is done and the summit attained and the barriers fall."*

Why did Barrie send his two friends to the quiet Angus glen? Was it by way of preparation for the silence of the Antarctic? Or was it because he knew that they would draw courage from the peace of the everlasting hills? Was it Margaret Ogilvy who suggested the idea to her son?

Barrie has been vastly helped by M'Connachie, his "writing half," that unaccountable person who might do almost anything, who wrote his plays and was utterly different from the serious-minded individual who observed the conventions and was known to the world at large as Sir James Barrie.

M'Connachie of the gay courage peeps out in the following passage :

"Izaak Walton quotes the saying that doubtless the Almighty could have created a finer fruit than the strawberry, but that doubtless also He never did. Doubtless, also, He could have provided us with better fun than hard work, but I don't know what it is. To be born poor is probably the next best thing. The greatest glory that has ever come to me was to be swallowed up in London, not knowing a soul, with no means of subsistence, and the fun of working till the stars went out. To have known anyone would have spoilt it.

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I did not even quite know the language. I rang for my boots, and they thought I said a glass of water, so I drank the water and worked on. There was no food in the cupboard, so I did not need to waste time in eating. The pangs and agonies when no proof came. How courteously tolerant was I of the postman without a proof for us: how M'Connachie, on the other hand, wanted to punch his head. The magic days when our article appeared in an evening paper. The promptitude with which I counted the lines to see how much we should get for it. Then M'Connachie's superb air of dropping it into the gutter. Oh, to be a free lance of journalism again—that darling jade! Those were days. Too good to last.”

All his life Barrie has quietly preached and quietly practised courage. He has known sorrow on sorrow. One after another of his friends has heard the knock and gone to join the Silent Companion of the lonely road. The silver cords of friendship have been loosed one by one; his loved ones have all gone, and he has grown very tired. It has taken courage to walk that long road. Honours have come his way in rich abundance; but they are as nothing for one whose heart is lonely and sad.

The author whom Barrie most resembles in English literature is Charles Lamb. The likeness is not only spiritual but physical, but what binds them most closely together is that both “had seen strange faces of calamity.” In one tender passage

where he speaks of the "great heart that palpitates through the pages of Charles Lamb," Barrie might almost have been writing about himself :

"The name of Lamb will for many a year bring proud tears to English eyes. He was a man, weak like the rest of us, who kept his sorrows to himself. Life to him was not among the trees. He had loved and lost. Grief laid a heavy hand on his brave brow. Dark were his nights ; horrid shadows in the house ; sudden terrors ; the heart stops beating waiting for a footstep. At that door comes Tragedy, knocking at all hours. Was Lamb dismayed ? The tragedy of his life was not dear to him. It was wound round those who were dearest to him ; it let him know that life has a glory even at its saddest, that humour and pathos clasp hands, that loved ones are drawn nearer, and the soul strengthened in the presence of anguish, pain, and death."

"The Entrancing Life " is full of Barrie's mature philosophy. Looking back on his student days and comparing them with present conditions, he expresses what thousands of graduates of the Scottish Universities must often have felt :

"Unions and Hostels such as, alas, were not in my time, now give Edinburgh students that social atmosphere which seemed in the old days to be the one thing lacking ; the absence of them maimed some of us for life."

Then he discusses the place of the Scottish



SIR JAMES BARRIE, CHANCELLOR OF EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY, WITH MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD, ON
WHOM HE CONFERRED THE HONORARY DEGREE
OF LL.D., FEBRUARY 28TH, 1932

Universities in the national life and points to the Scottish ideal of education :

“ . . . Our universities must remain what our forebears conceived with such great travail, men of the smiddies and the plough, the loom and the bothies, as well as scholars, they must remain first and foremost something to supply the needs of the genius of the Scottish people.

“ These needs are that every child born into this country shall as far as possible have an equal chance. The words ‘ as far as possible ’ tarnish this splendid hope, and they were not in the original dream. Some day we may be able to cast them out. It is by Education . . . that the chance is to be got. Since the war various nations have wakened to its being the one way out ; they know its value so well that perhaps the only safe boast left to us is that we knew it first. They seem, however, to be setting about the work with ultimate objects that are not ours. Their student from his earliest days is being brought up to absorb the ideas of his political rulers. . . . Nothing can depart more from the Scottish idea, which I take to be to educate our men and women primarily not for their country’s good but for their own, not so much to teach them what to think as how to think, not preparing them to give as little trouble as possible in the future, but sending them into it in the hope that they will give trouble. There is a small group of the Intelligentsia very much afraid of any creed, because its members are so despondent about their fellow-creatures.

They are not little minds, they contain some of the finest brains in the country, but they are as gloomy as if this were their moulting season. They think their land may endure a little longer if the new generations are plied with soporifics. All they ask of us, especially of youth, is a little all-round despair. No more talk about hitching your waggon to that star."

"The Entrancing Life" is perhaps one of the best known of the Barrie speeches, and is one of the most profound. In it we find the core of the philosophy that has been haunting him during the thinking and the working years—a philosophy that is in great measure Barrie but which is in deeper probing Barrie's own. Here we have the gist of the message which has led him through his interestingly sad pilgrimage :

"You may discover in the end that your life is not unlike a play in three acts, with the second act omitted. In the neatly constructed play of the stage each act moves smoothly to the next, they explain each other ; but it may not be so with yours ; it is not so with many of us. In less time than I hope you now think possible . . . you will be far advanced in the final act. There has been a second, your longest one, but how little record you have probably kept of it. All you know may just be that the man or woman you have become is not what you set out to be in the days of the Firth of Forth. That may not even damp you much, if prosperity has made you gross

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to some old aspirations. You may not know how or when the thief came in the night, nor that it was you that opened the door to him. But something had got into you in the middle act, and lay very still in you till it was your familiar. Slowly, furtively it pushed, never stopped pushing slowly, for it never tires, until it had you out and took your place. You may sometimes roam round the earthly tenement that once contained you, trying to get back. Perhaps you will get back. That sometimes happens. We may hope, however, that by the grace of God what entered was something good. All I can assure you is that in that second act, now about to be given, something will get in which is either to make or to destroy you. It has got in already if an uphill road dismays you. Would you care to know my guess at what is the entrancing life? . . . Carlyle held that genius was an infinite capacity for taking pains. I don't know about genius, but the entrancing life, I think, must be an infinite love of taking pains. You try it.

“One word more : The ‘ Great War ’ has not ended. Don't think that you have had the luck to miss it. It is for each of you the war that goes on within ourselves for self-mastery. Those robes you wear to-day are your khaki for that war. Your graduation day is your first stripe. Go out and fight.”

Then he goes deeper. Whence is that courage derived? What is its source and inspiration?

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Some of the Great Ones knew. As Paul journeyed towards Damascus, "suddenly there shined about him a light from heaven." Saint Augustine saw that light, as did John Bunyan and Margaret Ogilvy. Everybody has seen it if he has at any moment in his earthly career been suddenly conscious of God and the awful responsibilities which that knowledge has meant, its brilliance, its vanishing away. Shelley was dazzled by it.

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen amongst us, visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower . . .
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Barrie puts his hand across his eyes for a moment as he makes his confession that he has not found the world of fantasy satisfying spiritually, and that there are heights and depths in the land of the spirit which he has not yet reached, or perhaps has missed.

"Are we all conscious, fitfully, of a white light that hovers for a moment before our lives? It comes back for us from time to time to the very gasp of our days. Comes back for us—to take us where? So quickly fades as if congenial to its undertaking. Is it a messenger from that star? . . . the inaccessible friendly star. If we could follow the white light."

In 1933 Barrie presided as Chancellor when the University celebrated its three hundred and fiftieth birthday. Again the theme of his address was courage and the cultivation of the things of the spirit.

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Need a University have courage? Knowing well that the “rack of the rough world must still be her fortune,” she stands full target for all the winds of heaven. “For a University there can be no harbour.” Her best motto, he went on, is the one which Sir William Hamilton left on the walls of his classroom in Philosophy: “On earth there is nothing great but man, and in man there is nothing great but mind.” R. L. S., who sits in St. Giles’s in St. Gaudens bronze, would be saying at the end of all the ceremonies:

“Money alone is only a means; it presupposes a man to use it. The rich man can go where he pleases but perhaps please himself nowhere. He can buy a library or visit the whole world, but perhaps has neither patience to read nor intelligence to see. . . . The purse may be full and the heart empty. He may have gained the world and lost himself; and with all his wealth around him . . . he may live as blank a life as any tattered ditcher.”

In his address to the Rhodes Scholars at Oxford on June 20th, 1928, he advised them from his own experience:

“‘If you are to be writers . . . go out and meet the mistress of the spindle’—has he his weavers in mind as well as the Fates?—‘not fearfully, but with gay curiosity.’”

There is little gaiety in the curiosity of those younger novelists of to-day who are considered by

their fellows of the "Scottish Renaissance" to be the only Scottish realists. George Douglas's *The House with the Green Shutters*, the first novel to be deliberately written as a counterblast to the "Kailyard School," is a bitter, morbid book, the work of a soured and resentful man. Its keynote is the cry, "Ruin and murder, madness and death. . . ." No doubt Barrie knew the same sort of people in "tragic little Thrums," that Douglas knew in Babbie. No doubt Margaret Ogilvy knew them too, and pitied them; but they did not come to her house and were not among her familiars. An author gets from the world what he gives to the world. He finds the characters he wishes to find; he interprets them by his inner light. The world is as he sees it through the eyes of his own soul. As his days are so shall his strength be. Douglas paints the frustrated ones who have given way to despair and gone out hopelessly into the darkness. Barrie has done for the weavers of Thrums what Wordsworth did for the dalesmen of Cumberland. He has found beauty in grey lives and discovered romance in the commonplace; out of rough and unpromising material he has woven a web of goodly pattern which will stand the test. In his poem, ~~unlike~~ "At the Grave of Burns," Wordsworth has one inspiring passage in which he pays tribute to the Scottish poet,

Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

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That lesson Barrie, too, learned from Burns, whom no man understood better.

“ ‘One half of Burns we can all fathom,’ he told a Dumfries audience, ‘for he was so Scotch that he was and is our blood relation; the one who lived more vividly than the rest. . . . All the miseries of him, his misdeeds, his follies, we understand as we know some loved and erring son with whom we have sat up all night in the fields. That is the mortal part of him, and it is perhaps the one thing in all Scotland which we, his countrymen, ask outsiders to keep their hands off. There is also the immortal part, to which we don’t belong.’ ”

What irritates his critics most about Barrie is when they think they “have him,” to borrow one of his own expressions, they find he isn’t there at all. It is a trick he learned from Peter Pan. When they say superior things about “Kailyarders,” they suddenly realize they are talking about the author of *Dear Brutus*; when they praise *Peter Pan* they suddenly find themselves looking at a dull little public wash-house in the Tenements.

Some Scottish critics allege that he played tricks with the vernacular. But Barrie tells us that when he was gathering material from his mother for the earlier Kirriemuir stories :

“We always spoke to each other in broad Scotch, but now and again she would use a word that was new to me, or I might hear one of her con-

temporaries use it. Now is my opportunity to angle for its meaning. If I ask boldly what was that word she used just now, something like 'bilbie' or 'silvendy?' she blushes, and says that she never said anything so common, or hoots! it is some auld-farrant word about which she can tell me nothing. But if in the course of conversation I remark casually, 'Did he find bilbie?' or 'Was that quite silvendy!' (though the sense of the question is vague to me) she falls into the trap, and the words explain themselves in her replies."

Indeed, his early stories were rejected because he made his characters use the vernacular too literally. As he acquired a finer technique he began to suggest it more idiomatically. The Wylie family talk exactly as people like the Wylies talk in Scotland to-day. So with the Old Lady.

Another critic, William Power, insists that the modern Scottish writer must have "an active awareness that a Scot, like an Englishman, a Dane, or a Czech, is a particular modification of a European. In short, the only safe standard for the Scot is the national and international standard." And Eric Linklater gives this advice:

"If books in reasonable quantity and of good quality are going to be made on Scottish soil . . . the earth must be impregnated with new and living ideas. . . . Drain the land of lachrymose sentimentality, of prudery, and Pharisaism, of the poisons that afflict its soul."

“SAIL THOU ON”

But, as Conrad says :

“In this benevolent neutrality . . . all light would go out from art and from life.”

But to come back to the Address to the Rhodes Scholars. Presently the *motif* of *The Will* is heard again :

“The beginning of all you are to be already lies inside you—a little speck that is to grow while you sleep and while you are awake and that in fulness of time is to be the making of you or destroy you.”

And finally comes the characteristic note of courageous adventure : “Sail thou on.”

CHAPTER XIV

FAREWELL, MISS JULIE LOGAN

“NOT for years have I written anything, and it is rather sad to know that nobody seems to have noticed this except myself,”

Barrie said a few years ago. The last thing he wrote that is assured of permanency in English literature was *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan*, “a wintry tale” that appeared as a supplement of the *London Times* in 1931.

Farewell, Miss Julie Logan links itself with Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale*, Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Stevenson's *Thrawn Janet*, and John Buchan's *The Watcher on the Threshold*. But like all Barrie's work that recalls the work of someone else, it has qualities that only Barrie could have brought to its telling. It is an odd story that has in it far more than meets the eye. It is, if you will, a beautiful and tragic vision, a dream of loyalty to a lost cause, of fidelity to an ideal. It is a lovely piece of symbolism in which Barrie himself appears. It must never be forgotten that the personality of Barrie is inseparable from his work; he might say with Montaigne: “Gentle Reader, myselfe am the groundworke of my books.” In the end of the day, when the shadows are gathering remorselessly, Barrie goes back to the glen of Prosen, where he used to fish as a boy before he won to his “beloved London that was so hard to reach,” and in the glen he sees that the real friends are the old friends, and that these exist not merely in the flesh but in the spirit.

FAREWELL, MISS JULIE LOGAN

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw :
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

Did these words come back to Barrie's memory and suggest a name and a haunting vision of Beauty ? The Reverend Adam Yestreen—the name itself has a touch of timelessness about it—had been called to the parish in the glen and was trying to settle down. It was a fine place in summer, and in the autumn when the English gentry went there to shoot, and to make fun of and to be made fun of by the natives. But in winter it was not so pleasant. It was a haunted place. Stories of the '45 still lingered among the country folk, and they were more than stories, they had hardened into beliefs that had become a part of their daily lives. Mr. Yestreen laughed at the stories. But when the winter came he found himself shut off for months from the outside world, with no company but a woman servant, he too gradually began to fall under the influence of the place and became the victim of morbid fancies. The talk of the "strangers," these people beyond nature, of the bodiless that went about the locked glen began to work on his imagination. His reason, the teaching of his Church told him that these tales about Highland refugees being seen in the glen, poor hunted souls after Culloden, were all nonsense. He even preached

against such superstitious fancies ; but the Celt in him knew that the minister was talking against his own convictions.

One day in church he saw a beautiful young girl. Her name, the minister learned, was Miss Julie Logan, and she was staying at the big house. The minister lost his heart to her. From the first he was conscious that there was something unusual about her ; there was a look on her face that sparkled with youth and laughter, " as if a dove was brooding on it." For a time she seemed to have bewitched him. Then she went away and he woke up from his dream and came back to reality.

What is the symbolism of this weird story ? The Reverend Adam Yestreen is perhaps Barrie himself—Barrie in London. The kindly English come and go. They are friendly and good companions. But when they go he is suddenly aware of a great loneliness. The spirits that haunt the glen, that hover round his fancy are not altogether kindly spirits. The glen folk call them " the kindly ones," to propitiate them just as the Greeks did with the Eumenides. Beauty, as Adam Yestreen discovered, is not always kind. She can at times be too like Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* :

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
Who cried : " *La Belle Dame sans Merci*
Hath thee in thrall ! "

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I woke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

FAREWELL, MISS JULIE LOGAN

The vision of Beauty which came to the lonely man in the glen—or in London—enabled him to escape from the present ; it was a sore temptation to linger in this land of faëry. But he remembered Peter Pan and Mary Rose, and came back to reality before he had stayed away too long. Miss Julie was a wraith, a phantasm. Like Dick in *A Well-Remembered Voice*, she could only appear to one. She brought with her her own world of beauty and enchantment and peril, and had he remained in her company it would have been fatal to his life and work. When he awoke to find her gone he felt shaken and bereft, but he had not lost his integrity. Beauty, he discovered, is not of the other world alone ; it may be in the very web and pattern of life as we weave it ; it is of the spirit ;

It always must be with us or we die.

In time Adam Yestreen was translated to a city parish where he had little time to brood over lost causes and impossible loyalties. But as he grew older the memory of his experience in the glen grew stronger, and he realized how much it had become a part of him :

“ As I become feeble in the uptake, time will no doubt efface every memory of Miss Julie of the Logan, and of mornings I will be waking up without the thought that I have dropped something. Of course, it is harder on young Adam. I have a greater drawing to the foolish youth that once I was than I have pretended. When I am gone it may be that he will away back to that glen.”

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

As we grow older we return to the scenes of our youth. Has Barrie really been away from Kirriemuir at all ?

Where is the real ? Where the ideal ? Did Barrie as he pictured Adam Yestreen, hear these words of Margaret Ogilvy's much-loved Carlyle ?

"Yes, here in this poor miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is they Ideal : work it out therefrom ; and working, believe, live, be free."

And no doubt Margaret Ogilvy passed on to her son the secret of her life, something deeper and stronger than even the teaching of Carlyle, the faith by which she lived.

For years Barrie had been silent ; then it began to be whispered, and finally it was noised abroad that he was at work on another play. It was said to be a religious play ; beyond that the public were permitted to know nothing. It leaked out, however, that it had to do with the youth of King David and that it had been specially written for Elizabeth Bergner who had made a great hit in *Escape Me Never*. On November 21st, 1936, after having been twice postponed on account of Miss Bergner's illness, *The Boy David* was produced at the King's Theatre in Edinburgh. On the morning of its appearance Mr. W. Frazer Mitchell declared in some verses which appeared in *The Scotsman* :

Now waits no audience merely, but a nation ;
A world expectant ;

everyone who was anyone in the Scottish capital

FAREWELL, MISS JULIE LOGAN

went to see it; the occasion was hailed as "the greatest first night since Home's *Douglas*." To quote *The Scotsman* :

"The play was received by the crowded audience, a large number of whom had standing room only, with a close attention and ready responses, which showed how much it moved and interested them. Sometimes at the close of one of the more moving scenes, the applause was delayed until the tension had eased a little. There was almost what might be regarded as an epilogue at the close. The curtain was raised again and again, and the applause seemed to grow steadily in volume. Miss Bergner appeared between Sir Martin Harvey and Mr. Tearle, a shy, slightly embarrassed figure, no longer under the spell of her impersonation. She held her head down, or looked aside at one or other of her supporters, who seemed to be urging her to speak. At length she came forward and raised her hand, and the audience once more heard her very individual voice in a single sentence—"I have the honour to express Sir James Barrie's gratitude." There were loud cries for the author; but Sir James Barrie, confined to his room by rheumatism and lumbago, did not appear."

Encouraged by the success of the play in Edinburgh Mr. C. B. Cochran transferred it to London where it opened at His Majesty's Theatre on December 14th. On Saturday, January 30th, 1937, *The Boy David* was withdrawn.

What was the reason for the London failure?

The cast was an "all star" one; the stage setting was perfect; the theme of the ancient mystery was handled with reverence, tenderness, subtlety and charm. It gripped the imagination of the Edinburgh audiences and they went away feeling they had passed through an emotional experience which left them dazed. That was the Barrie magic. He had used it before in *Dear Brutus* and *Mary Rose*. But this time he took them to heights of tragedy which he had never before attempted to scale, and brought them into touch with the world of the spirit and with the deep things of God which lie out with and far beyond the realms of magic and faëry long ago known to him in the earlier days of his questing. There were many Barrie touches in the play, flashes of humour, quaint sayings and phrases, particularly in the first act.

"When I am exalted, contradict me not or it will go ill with you, woman,"

has a familiar ring about it. Perhaps it was just this Barrie touch and not the preoccupation of the public with other matters at the moment, that caused the play to be withdrawn so speedily. The critics having hurriedly re-read their Bibles made the discovery that The Boy David was not the David of the Scriptures but a sort of ineffectual Peter Pan interpreted by Bergner. Barrie's own defence was that he was thinking about a much younger David than the youth whom the critics had in mind. The truth is that it was not so much of the Boy David as of the Boy Barrie that the dramatist was thinking,

not so much of the house of Jesse as the house in the Tenements, not so much of David's mother as of his own, not so much of David and Jonathan as of himself and Robb. The whistle proves that. Barrie as we know, always put much of himself into his work and *The Boy David* is no less autobiographical than its predecessors. If Barrie did not actually appear before his audience when they called for him that first night in the King's Theatre, he had been with them all the evening without their knowing it. Barrie until the very end had much of the child about him—a wise child. It was the wise child part of him that was in the theatre that night. We have already quoted a passage which tells us what Barrie believed himself to be and how he looked at himself. And as it is one of the most revealing things he ever wrote it can stand being quoted again :

“ I think one remains the same person throughout, merely passing, as it were, in these lapses of time, from one room to another, but all in the same house. If we unlock the rooms of the far past we can peer into and see ourselves, busily occupied in beginning to be you and me.”

When *The Boy David* utters his involuntary prayer : “ I know not who I am or what I am. Something frightens me. Other One, will you not tell me what to do ? ” that is not the David of the Bible. True, his anointing seemed to have attracted little attention. Even his own brother, Eliab, seemed unaware of it, for he said, “ Why camest thou down

hither ? and with whom has thou left those few sheep in the wilderness ? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart ; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.” David himself seemed unconscious of his destiny. “ And David said unto Saul, Who am I ? and what is my life, or my father’s family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king ? ” But he was no irresolute dreamer whom the women came out of all cities of Israel to meet, singing and dancing, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick, answering one another as they played, and saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

In The Boy David Barrie saw himself, filled with immortal longings, uncertain which road to take, a little fearful as he looked out on a world that seemed so big, so indifferent, so actively and acutely hostile. But how could the London critics be expected to know that ? They saw and remembered most clearly the splendour and the beauty of the vision scenes until the Boy David seemed to fade into nothingness beside them. How could they be expected to know that these visions had come to a little boy in the Tenements years and years ago, and that that little boy, although he became a great man and spent the latter years of his pilgrimage in London, had never really been away from Kirriemuir at all ?

James Matthew Barrie “ died,” as they say, in London, on the nineteenth day of June, 1937. On the twenty-fourth they brought him back to Kirriemuir and laid him in the cemetery beside the Hill. “ To die will be an awfully big adventure.”

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